

The Ukrainian Week

International edition

#7 (89) July 2015

How profound are changes
in the SBU

How the Anti-Corruption
Bureau sees its prospects

The first impact of the shock
therapy in Ukraine's economy



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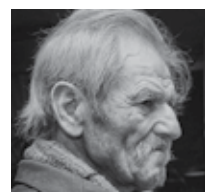


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The Ukrainian Week

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Chief Editor Dmytro Krapyvenko

Editors Anna Korbut, Lidia Wolanskyj, Shaun Williams

E-mail office@tyzhden.ua

www.ukrainianweek.com

Tel. (044) 351-13-87

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ТИЖДЕНЬ



Systemic Shape-Shifting

Author: Bohdan Butkevych

For possibly the first time in Ukraine's entire history, top officials in the Prosecutor General's Office, one of the country's most corrupt agencies, have been arrested: Main Investigative Bureau Director Volodymyr Shapakin and Kyiv Oblast Deputy Prosecutor Oleksandr Korniyets. What's more, it was a scene worthy of an action movie, complete with Alfa special forces breaking down doors and lots of loot in the form of hundreds of thousands of dollars cash, UAH 3 million, and even diamonds—caught red-handed taking bribes—, all of it seized from criminals in uniform.¹

Of course, later, in the time-honored traditions of Ukrainian “justice,” the court set bail for these two officials at UAH 3 million, which is three times less than the money found in their offices alone during the very first search. In the last week, some more prosecutors were arrested. The thought that this could finally be the real battle with corruption cheered the heart of many a Ukrainian. »

¹ In Ukraine, prosecutors wear police-style uniforms.

Actually, this all looks very hopeful. Finally, the Georgian reformer David Sakvarelidze has gone into action and—without even asking permission from the highest boss, Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin who, for health reasons, has not been in office lately—caught a fairly big fish in his own agency. For the first time, the clear position of President Poroshenko, giving credit where credit is due, made it impossible for Volodymyr Huzyr, the first deputy PG and an influential man within the agency, to sweep the case under the rug. Or to open a criminal investigation against this “hyperactive” expat, as is typical in the enforcement agencies, to “hang” him and keep him under constant control. So far, so good. For now.

If only it weren't for the judge's decision to set bail and persistent rumors that these two prosecutors will be released in the usual manner and will then flee to better times. And this one detail overrides all the positive, because it clearly raises the question to what degree the system is being controlled, who is actually in charge and how: is the president running it or is running the president? Or even the question of the real reason for this flashy arrest, which isn't the first one: remember the arrest of the bosses of the State Emergency Services, Bochkovskiy and Stoyetskiy, during a Cabinet meeting. And where are they? Free as birds. Has there been a court ruling? Nope, the court hasn't even begun to hear this case.

SHAPE-SHIFTING AS PSEUDO-CHANGE

So what's really going on? It looks like Mr. Poroshenko is turning out to be the smartest of all of Ukraine's presidents. For starters, in the sense of being able to establish his chain-of-command under the most unfavorable conditions possible, conditions that are growing worse by the day. The economy is on the ropes, the public is out for blood and lustration, and the war is getting more and more expensive. So how can lustration be undertaken if the only individuals that you can count on are those who most need to be lustrated? For instance, you get into a fight with that Kolomoyskiy guy and ally yourself with the former mayor of Dnipropetrovsk, a Party of Regions and Kuchma stal-

wart, Ivan Kulychenko, who's been able to cut a deal with every administration and now what? Lustrate him? Who will then help you against the rebellious oligarch?

This is how the various combination moves begin, like the one that the nation saw on Sunday at the PGO's. President Poroshenko has a very good sense of the national mood and understands that a few pawns must be sacrificed to win the game. And his idea of winning the game is to concentrate power in his own hands while generally maintaining the current top-down system of governing. He doesn't mind a little window-dressing, cosmetic changes. He's even prepared to trust certain expats. But is this anything more than a cover-up and paying tribute to pressure from civil society and western creditors, all of whom are demanding at least some kind of clear and concrete result that can be touched and tasted?

The President urgently needs some high-profile, impressive success stories. This is what Mikheil Saakashvili is attempting to do in Odesa Oblast right now and now Sakvarelidze has been given the green light in the PGO. Moreover, rumor has it that, come fall, the

was under Viktor Yanukovych. Because its underpinnings—the chain-of-command, the nepotism, the built-in corruption factor—will remain exactly the same. Because these leaders cannot imagine any other kind of power. And so this is why we are seeing this very public shape-shifting, in which it's not the government machine that is being changed, but the faces and cogs in it.

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

In short, the flashy arrest of prosecutors is intended to convey a few very simple messages from the top of the heap to all the executors, placed within a suitably theatrical framework for greater clarity. Firstly, there is a lord in this manor and there is no freedom, whatever anyone might have imagined after this past year. Any sign of disloyalty will lead to dismissal—such as happened with Nalyvaichenko, in case anyone missed the point. Everybody's going to continue working as before, but there will be a touch more visible freedom and democracy for public consumption.

Secondly, steal smart. Nobody's about to prohibit clever ways of making money in the civil service: why else would anyone join it in Ukraine? But if you don't know how to use your head and keep hundreds of thousands of dollars in your office—well, sorry, you will be arrested in a very public fashion and your money confiscated.

Thirdly, if you're caught, nobody's going to come to save you, as there are already enough problems to choke on. Of course, no one will get in your way if you try wiggling out of it, but that will depend on your personal connections and assets. If you float out, great. If not, too bad.

The sad thing in this situation is that the shape-shifting that the President and PM are working on, after seemingly burying their hatchets and deciding to be buddies once more in an ever-thickening atmosphere, has no chance of succeeding. Ukraine has reached the point of no return, when the old system is completely dysfunctional, but the question of launching a new one is not lacking political will—it's lacking even the awareness that this is what's needed. ■

WHAT WE SEE LOOKS LIKE PUBLIC SHAPE-SHIFTING, CHANGING, NOT THE STATE MACHINE ITSELF, BUT THE FACES AND COGS IN IT

Georgian might even replace the ailing Shokin as Prosecutor General.

In reality, Petro Poroshenko is now being forced to agree to a certain amount of rebuilding of the Ukrainian system. But it's important to understand what principles underlie this. If he and PM Arseniy Yatseniuk wanted to undertake lightning-fast radical reforms, all the necessary conditions for this were already in place, war or no war. Yet they did not do it, and they won't do it, because they are simply unable to operate in a different dimension from the one they are currently in. So all they will do is tweak the system a little, based on the circumstances. It has to become a bit more effective, a bit less corrupt, but everything simply done for show, just as it



When Russia's Psychological Warfare Succeeds

Author:
Edward Lucas

If you have to live in a bad area, it is prudent to make sure your locks, doors, windows and burglar alarms are secure. Once that is done, relax: it is unwise to shred your nerves by reacting to every outside noise.

The same is true for the Baltic States. Like an obnoxious teenage hoodlum who enjoys making menacing gestures through the windows, Russia is waging psychological warfare on Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—three countries which for historical reasons it should be treating with particular courtesy and respect.

Last week's stunt was a perfect example. Put simply: the prosecutor-general's office said it would review the legality of the Soviet Union's decision to grant Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania independence in 1991.

The news aroused uproar in the Baltic States. President Dalia Grybauskaitė spoke of her nation's "blood and sacrifice", fuming that "no one has the right to threaten" its independence. Estonia's foreign minister said the episode was an example of the "resurgent imperialistic mood" in Russia.

It is easy to understand the alarm. Russia has declared the transfer of Crimea to Soviet Ukraine in 1954 unconstitutional,

retrospectively justifying its seizure of that territory. Similarly, querying the legal basis of the Baltic States' independence could—in theory—provide a legal pretext for mischief, or even attack.

But once people start drawing that conclusion, Russia's psychological warfare is already achieving its goal. Confidence shrivels. Why make plans to visit, do business with or live in a region which is clearly in such trouble? Other places look safer. Such feelings stoke emigration and slow the economy.

Moreover, highlighting every detail of Russia's bullying behaviour does not necessarily rally support. It can also prompt pacifist-minded outsiders to start searching for ways to appease Russia and avoid the ultimate horror: war. ("There's no military solution" will be written on the West's tomb-

stone). Worse, weak-willed allies may start advising (or arm-twisting) the Baltic States to take such steps.

Either way, the psychological warfare works. Publicly threatening the Baltics makes them feel weak and friendless—and thus easier prey for the next stunt. It costs Russia little: the Kremlin did not back the initiative—and publicly deplored it. The prosecutor-general's office said it was merely responding formally to a request from two parliamentary deputies.

In fact, rumblings and mumblings by officials in Moscow have little to do with real security. The Baltic states were not "granted" independence in 1991. They regained it because the Soviet Union had collapsed—not least thanks to the Russian Federation, whose leader, Boris Yeltsin, in those days regarded the independence-minded Baltics as great friends and allies.

What Russia may or may not think about the Baltics now is irrelevant. As far as the rest of the world

is concerned, their statehood dates from 1918 and was interrupted only the four decades of foreign occupation that followed Stalin's illegal annexation of 1940. Russian officials might just as well investigate the sale of Alaska to

**PUBLICLY THREATENING
THE BALTICS MAKES THEM
FEEL WEAK AND FRIENDLESS—
AND THUS EASIER PREY FOR
THE NEXT STUNT**

the United States.

More and more outsiders (even Germans) have come to realise that Russia is a bad neighbour. And as a result NATO is making serious efforts to defend its Baltic members: with plans, exercises, heavy equipment, rapid-reaction forces, increased spending, and intense intelligence cooperation. We are no longer in the 1990s. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are not a military pushover. The world is watching.

Of course, Russia may still choose to risk World War Three and attack NATO. If so, what the prosecutor-general (who might be better termed the persecutor-general) thinks about the Soviet Union's diplomatic history in its dying days will be the least of our worries. ■

About the author:

Edward Lucas is senior vice-president at the Center for European Policy Analysis, a think-tank in Washington, DC, and Warsaw

Hostages of the Kremlin

President Poroshenko says there are 30 Ukrainian citizens currently being illegally held in Russia. Human rights advocates that they know about the situation with 11, most of whom the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has yet to provide with lawyers

Author:
Stanislav
Kozliuk

The wave of politically-motivated arrests of Ukrainians began almost immediately after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. One of the leaders of UNA-UNSO, Mykola Karpiuk, was arrested in March, film director Oleh Sentsov in May, and pilot Nadia Savchenko in June, accused variously of organizing criminal gangs, terrorism and mass murder. But there have been far less high-profile incidents as well, often involving very ordinary individuals. The arrests of Artem Hordienko, Vitaliy Kryvosheyev and Kyrylo Pylypenko

cates during the time of the Russo-Georgian War in 2008, when a similar campaign against Georgians was rolled out.

“For a long time after being arrested, the Ukrainian consul and lawyers are prevented from visiting the individual being detained,” explains Maria Tomak, a journalist with the Center for Civil Freedom. “In short, the most basic rules that the justice system should be respecting are completely ignored. For instance, a Ukrainian citizen by the name of Yuriy Soloshenko.¹ He was arrested in the center of Mos-

Not all those being held can boast heroic tales. There are those who agree to collaborate with the agencies holding them and to sign any statements demanded of them. For instance, there’s the case of Serhiy Lytvynov. Russian propaganda claimed that he was a member of the Dnipro voluntary battalion, but it became known that Lytvynov was actually from the village of Komyshe in Stanytsia-Luhanska County and had never joined up because he was sick. Prior to being arrested, which took place last August in Russia he was working as a com-



were gleefully reported in Russian media in April 2014, which called the four men “spies” and “terrorists” who were supposedly preparing to blow up places in Russian cities. Altogether, 25 such individuals have been written about. In time, however, it turned out that these “dangerous criminals” were ordinary migrant workers who were eventually deported from the Russian Federation, according to Ukrainian press reports.

In most cases, the people were originally arrested under the popular soviet heading of “hooliganism.” But then these supposed hooligans found themselves being interrogated by FSB officials who were very curious about the Euromaidan and Praviy Sektor. Stories like this, and on a similar scale, can be heard from Russian human rights advo-



cow when he arrived there on a business trip. Eventually, he found himself in the infamous Lefortovo prison. From the very start, he was accused of industrial espionage, but the case has since been requalified as regular espionage. He’s been imprisoned in Russia for nearly half a year now and not once has the consul been allowed to see him.”

On May 13, Savchenko’s lawyer Mark Faigin announced that some 30 Ukrainian citizens are currently imprisoned in Russia. Shortly after that, President Poroshenko mentioned the same figure. Euromaidan SOS, an advocacy group, points out that the State Security Bureau (SBU) promised to provide a list of names to confirm this information, but two weeks after the meeting, there is still no list of prisoners.



mercial assistant to a private business owner. He’s now implicated in what has been called “the Great Ukrainian Affair,” a slew of cases in which the detainees are being accused of mass murder and using prohibited methods of warfare, the most famous of whom is Nadia Savchenko.

Lytvynov has already signed a confession admitting to murder and rape. In addition, he supposedly told how Ihor Kolomoyskiy personally brought money to the Dnipro battalion and issued “criminal orders.” “We have to point out that Lytvynov is a fairly controversial figure,” says Tomak. “Right now, it’s not even clear how he ended up in Russia in the first place, this ordinary villager without even a high-school diploma. If you read the official transcripts of the

interrogations, you can see that his supposedly dozens of rapes are described in one and the same manner. It's obvious that these 'confessions' were written in certain offices.

"We can also assume that he agreed to collaborate with the agencies in exchange for something he was promised. There is information that his brother was a displaced person who supposedly moved to Russia. In short, it's hardly a heroic story. But what's important is something else. People are being used by Russia to serve its own purposes, in order for this criminal case to have some story." She adds that there could well be more people incriminated in this particular case, although it's hard to name even an approximate number.

In addition to this "Great Ukrainian Affair," in the Russian Federation, there is also a "Caucasian Affair." This involves Karpiuk and Stanyslav Klykh, who was arrested in August 2014. After 10

Klykh, although his situation is worse. Karpiuk's family kept getting letters, albeit weird ones, but nothing at all is known about Klykh. We think that he is being held in Vladikavkaz, but we need to find him.

In addition to Ukrainians, the

"AFTER A YEAR OF WAR AND ARRESTS, UKRAINIANS HELD CAPTIVE BY THE AGGRESSOR COUNTRY CANNOT GET ANY FINANCIAL SUPPORT"

Kremlin's list of captives includes Russian citizens as well. There have been cases when the Russian Federation has accused its own citizens of spying on behalf of Ukraine. In fact, they are being accused of treason, which is a far worse crime than something like spying. A classic example of this is the story of Sergei Rudniev. He is a Russian citizen who had residency in Ukraine and had lived in Dnipropetrovsk for 12

The second question, or rather problem is the fact that in a year of war and captivity, Ukraine still has not managed to allocate money to its political prisoners for defense lawyers.

"Lawyers perform a critical function," explains Tomak. "They ensure that there is contact between the person and the rest of the world. There are examples when the 'free' lawyers provided by the RF to captives simply worked on breaking them down. They would do everything to convince the captives that the consul simply didn't feel like coming to see them and that their country had turned its back on them." For instance, in the case of a recently-released student from Lviv, Yuriy Yatsenko, the lawyer was paid for by Freedom House and a Czech humanitarian organization called "People in Trouble."

"We held a briefing in the Verkhovna Rada and called on the factions to establish contact with families and help captives finan-



months of captivity, it's still not clear where these men are being held. So far, neither consul nor lawyers have been able to see them. When it comes to Karpiuk, he has been turned into a one-man horror show of everything imaginable and unimaginable that terrifies ordinary Russians: he belongs to Praviy Sektor and he was involved in the war in Abkhazia and Transnistria. Now he's being accused of participating in the Chechen war.

"Yes, UNSO men were fighting in Chechnya, but Karpiuk was not among them," says Tomak. "The thing is, the Kremlin needs to try people on a territorial basis. It can't really try Karpiuk based on actions taken outside the territory of Russia! So he has to be incriminated for setting up criminal gangs. And the same thing is being done with



years. When one of his friends, a Cyborg,² was taken into captivity by the militants, Rudniev went with two volunteers to negotiate his release. The "insurgents" promptly arrested all three of them, after which Rudniev ended up to the Tikhoretskiy Prison in Krasnodarskiy Krai in Russia. He was accused of illegally crossing the border, i.e., a Russian citizen apparently illegally crossed the border into his own country, and of possession of weapons. Later on, he was released under an amnesty deal.

Human rights advocates from Euromaidan SOS note that right now there are two important questions regarding Russia's prisoners that need answering. Firstly, there are rumors that Ukrainian soldiers are being kept as slaves in Chechnya.



cially without any intermediaries," says Tomak angrily. "Savchenko is being cared for by her party, yes, but others have simply been abandoned. This is crazy. We still have a war here yet the people held captive by the aggressor country cannot get any financial support."

The only excuse the Foreign Ministry offers is that there simply aren't any items in the budget that allow such expenditures as lawyers' fees, whose services, in the case of the Russian Federation, cost a considerable amount. Lawyers who take up politically-motivated cases are particularly costly. To fix the situation, the Rada only needs to make a few amendments—but so far it hasn't. And so Ukraine's unacknowledged prisoners of war can only wait and pray. ■

¹ A pensioner who was the general manager of the Znam'ya Factory in Poltava for 20 years

² "Cyborg" is the name given to the men who fought to defend Donetsk International Airport for 242 days before finally being defeated by Russian proxies

Who Are You, Mr. Hrytsak?

Author:
Denys
Kazanskyi

On July 2, the Verkhovna Rada by what looked like a routine vote approved the appointment of Vasyl Hrytsak as the Head of the State Security Bureau otherwise known as SBU. The candidate proposed by President Petro Poroshenko was met with surprisingly unanimous approval of 340 votes in favor. In contrast, the Parliament's vote to dismiss Hrytsak's predecessor Valentyn Nalyvaychenko didn't go anywhere near as smoothly. It took the head of state great efforts to gather enough votes. In fact, this dismissal nearly created a split among the ranks of president's Parliamentary faction.

For many Nalyvaychenko's dismissal came as a surprise. The president himself struggled to provide a coherent explanation why he suddenly felt the need to change the head of SBU. In reality the only reason behind this move was Poroshenko's desire to have an executive completely loyal to him in charge of the Security Service. Whereas Nalyvaychenko's First Deputy Vasyl Hrytsak had been appointed by Po-

roshenko after his election in May 2014, and was practically not accountable to the head of SBU, who had been in charge of the body since after the Maidan.

It is hard to find any other realistic reasons for swapping Valentyn Nalyvaychenko with Vasyl Hrytsak. Had the president been unhappy with the performance of the SBU, it would make sense to replace its entire leadership. Lustration in the SBU ranks wouldn't go amiss either, but there seems to be no rush to conduct it. Moreover the people in charge of the most corrupt departments within the SBU remain at their positions or have even been promoted.

It is no secret that after Poroshenko had become president Nalyvaychenko was rendered little more than a figurehead. Both his deputies – the Head of the Anti-Corruption Department Andriy Artiukhov and the Head of the Anti-Terrorism Centre (ATC) Vasyl Hrytsak – have been appointed by the head of state. Sacking them was beyond Nalyvaychenko's powers, and therefore he had no real sway over his subordinates. The

only department still remaining under his control was Counterintelligence.

In essence, Hrytsak and Artiukhov are the ones responsible for most of the corruption within the Security Service. Historically, it is the Anti-Corruption Department that provided cover for the biggest crimes in Ukraine, including illegal business, money laundering through conversion centers, contraband etc. Meanwhile the ATC is de-facto responsible for the contraband from the ATO zone ("zone of the Anti-Terrorist Operation", the official term for the zone of armed conflict in the east of Ukraine, including the occupied territories – **Ed.**). All the trains with lumber, fuel tank trucks, trailers full of goods, images and videos of which we've seen so many times, they all belong to Vasyl Hrytsak's area of responsibility. As does the fact that the cases of passes to the ATO zone being simply purchased have become increasingly commonplace. At this point the necessary passing documents can be easily bought on the internet via middlemen. Yet this outrageous fact

Vasyl Hrytsak is the President's man. This seems to be the key motivation behind this appointment



PHOTO: UNIAN

did not preclude the head of the ATC getting a promotion.

As one MP confessed off the record, if the MPs had any idea what sort of candidate was to be proposed as Nalyvaychenko's replacement, they wouldn't be as eager to vote for his dismissal. But the president kept cards close to his chest not naming the successor until much later.

The new SBU chief is a rather wealthy man. In his tax declaration Vasyl Hrytsak, whose entire career was in public service, specified that he owns a top of the line Toyota Land Cruiser costing close to UAH 1.5 million, as well as a Harley Davidson Sportster motorcycle worth UAH 330,000. That is with official annual income of only UAH 286,000, if the declaration is to be believed.

"How can an officer, who has been in civil service all his life and yet, according to the official declaration, owns half a dozen expensive vehicles, be appointed the head of SBU? The person, who headed the ATC throughout the entire year of defeats? The person, who conceived and continues advocating the system of passes through the front line – the new kind of large scale corruption?" – wrote the Samopomich faction MP Yehor Soboliev on his Facebook page.

By the way, the son of the new SBU Head Oleh Hrytsak also happens to be an interesting individual. The young man of 26 has been the deputy prosecutor of Kyiv's Solomyanskyi district for a number of years. At such a young age, however, the fellow already managed to tarnish his reputation rather considerably. Oleh Hrytsak was the state prosecutor against Auto-Maidan activists, who were arrested and beaten by the Berkut riot police during the Maidan in Kyiv in January 2014. Back then the court ruled to send the arrested protesters to pretrial detention for two months. All of them, including a 70-year-old man.

The journalists of the Schemes weekly on UA:PERSHYI TV channel have been able to establish that Oleh Hrytsak together with his mother Olha Hrytsak back in 2008 registered a company called Olviya-1 specializing in meat trade, which profited from state procurement. In 2011 through 2012, during the Yanukovich regime the firm was very active in supplying frozen meat to government entities. According to the journalists, the state paid UAH

ELECTRONIC
PASSES TO
SECTOR B
GUARANTEED:
Trade in
passes to the
ATO zone has
been largely
overlooked
by the SBU
and other
competent
authorities



2.831 million to the Hrytsak family for frozen meat.

Vasyl Hrytsak's wife remains the chairman of Olviya-1 to this day. On top of that, her company shares its registration address and telephone with the company Mostobud ran by a former Party of Regions MP Volodymyr Prodyvus of Vinnytsia. Vasyl Hrytsak refused to comment on his family's business ties.

It is peculiar that MPs Serhiy Leshchenko and Mustafa Nayyem (Bloc of Petro Poroshenko – **Ed.**), who not so long ago used to excel in investigative journalism uncovering corruption cases, both suddenly decided to "overlook" all the glaring

Korniyets, both of whom were caught taking a bribe (**see. p. 4 for more details**).

Having said that, there are concerns that such a flurry of activity by SBU may turn out little more than theatrics, designed to showcase the merits of the new SBU chief and prove that the president made the right choice. It resembles the way the current Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin took the office replacing Vitaliy Yarema. Almost immediately after his appointment followed the arrest of the Oleksandr Yefremov, one of the men behind the anti-Ukrainian insurgency in Luhansk. But with time it became clear that there was never an intention to get Yefremov locked up. Other individuals involved in scandalous criminal affairs were also allowed to escape. Those responsible for the massacre at the Maidan in Kyiv were never brought to responsibility either.

The contraband flows into the ATO zone that came into being during Vasyl Hrytsak's term in charge of the Anti-Terrorism Centre are yet to dry out. Just recently volunteer turned into Defence Ministry official Yuriy Biriukov reported on the astonishing scale of illegal trafficking on Facebook. And just like before, the passes into the ATO zone are being sold left and right. One can find them online or even through advertising posters in the streets. Therefore "drastic changes" is not the definition that can be applied to what transpires within the Security Service. In general the SBU's activity will, as per usual, depend on the outside pressure applied by the civil society. Without this pressure Ukraine's march towards reforms is way too slow and inefficient. ■

A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY BY SBU MAY TURN OUT LITTLE MORE THAN THEATRICALS, DESIGNED TO SHOWCASE THE MERITS OF THE NEW SBU CHIEF AND PROVE THE PRESIDENT'S RIGHT CHOICE

signs of corruption surrounding the new SBU chief, but at the same time were all over Nalyvaychenko's case, as soon as the latter fell into disfavor with President Poroshenko.

Interestingly, on his first week as the SBU Head Hrytsak got to business with noticeable enthusiasm. The Security Service immediately produced a number of press releases reporting about thwarted terrorist acts and detained terrorists. Additionally, SBU operatives took part in the odious arrest of Volodymyr Shapakin, the Deputy Head of Main Department of Prosecutor General's Office, and Deputy Prosecutor of Kyiv Oblast Oleksandr

Artem Sytnyk: “The Anti-Corruption Bureau’s task is to break the stereotypes of society accustomed to living in a corrupt environment”

In an exclusive interview with *The Ukrainian Week*, the director of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NAB) spoke about fighting corruption in the judiciary, the creation of a “corruption registry”, and regional management of anti-corruption efforts.

U.W.: You are often questioned about your many years of experience in the prosecutor’s office and the potential that “personal ties” may interfere with your impartiality. To what extent might your past work hinder your current position?

– Frankly, it’s difficult to comment on this nonsense about “personal ties”, and I don’t have time for it. Regarding these “accusations” I would say that, for example, there is a perception in our society that most journalists are corrupt, but you probably disagree with that, right? As for my experience in the prosecutor’s office, my name has never been involved in any corruption scandals. I worked for 10 years and when I saw that the fight against corruption was being sidelined (with the advent of Yanukovich regime), I decided to retire.

U.W.: As a former prosecutor, you are well aware of the long-standing rivalry between the prosecutor’s office, the SBU and the Interior Ministry – and the lack of cooperation between these institutions. Will the creation of the

NAB become another component added to this rivalry in the law enforcement sector? How can it be rectified?

– Discussions between law enforcement agencies is a normal process, because they have conflicting points of accountability. I can not confirm any facts regarding a rivalry between agencies, as they are not known to me. I would not rule out the possibility that there will be times when another agency will challenge an investigation by the NAB. Some discussion of legal issues between the security forces may occur. This process is not

Interviewed
by
**Tetiana
Omelchenko**

unique to Ukraine. In France there are the police administrative and police judiciaire with similar powers. In the US there are the police and the FBI, among which there is also competition. But this is healthy.

U.W.: Often the results of investigations by the SBU and the General Prosecutor’s Office are undermined by the judiciary. Do you expect NAB initiatives to face the same fate? Can the fight against corruption be thwarted at the level of courts?

– According to sociological surveys, the highest level of corruption takes place in the judiciary. When I was vying for the position of NAB director, I stressed that overcoming corruption in this area would be a priority for NAB. If you compare this with the prosecution, then the lowest-ranked officer whose affairs might be investigated by the NAB is the head of an oblast-level prosecutor’s office. County-level prosecutors do not fall within our jurisdiction. As for the judges, our bureau is considering corruption cases against all of them in case they commit crimes of corruption. That is why I plan to establish a separate unit that will deal exclusively with corruption in the judiciary.

We have announced a competition for the first 100 detective positions, but in general we are planning to have 255 detectives in 6 departments. One of these will focus exclusively on the judiciary. I am sure that if NAB su-



pervises the case all the way through, the risk of judges blocking the adequate verdict will be significantly reduced. And most importantly, if evidence of the defendants' unequivocal guilt is provided and duly recorded in the criminal proceedings before a court, and the trial itself is supervised properly, then the risk of the judge reaching an unlawful verdict is also much smaller. We will have results, but these will take certain efforts: to restore order to the courts, the prosecution, and the law enforcement system in general.

U.W.: If there is a need to detain a corrupt law enforcement official, which security forces will be involved?

– The NAB has its own fighting unit comprised of 60 officers. It reports to my deputy and will be very important, at least in the first months and years of NAB's existence. Staff are recruited through open competition. They have a broad range of functions and tasks, including operations to arrest persons suspected of committing corruption offenses, ensuring the safety of participants in NAB criminal proceedings and NAB's workers themselves, because there will certainly be attempts to exert pressure on them.

U.W.: NAB officers will probably be paid well. Won't they be resented by the rest of the lower-paid law enforcement agencies?

– This is a question for the legislators. The new police force recently launched in Kyiv is also offering decent salaries. If you read the new law on the prosecutor's office, the prosecutor's salary will be five times greater than it is today. Now we've generally taken a course toward the proper compensation of law enforcement officials. This is necessary because, for example, the prosecutor's salary of just USD 200 creates a high risk of corruption. When I resigned from the prosecutor's office in 2011, I had a monthly salary of nearly USD 1,000. (At the rate of 8 UAH / USD 1). Since then, earnings have not increased to match the hryvnia's devaluation. Higher salaries for NAB staff (espe-

cially detectives) can eliminate the risk of corruption. Officers will not be forced to look for additional sources of income, and higher salaries will enhance their personal responsibility.

U.W.: Some believe that NAB was only established in order to pander to the wishes of Ukraine's Western partners, and that a de facto separate anti-corruption body is not necessary. Do the GPU, SBU, and Interior Ministry truly lack the power to combat bribery?

– Anti-Corruption Bureaus exist in Romania, Poland and Latvia, for example, but not in the United States or Georgia (where the prosecution service was successfully reformed). If the existing law enforcement authorities were effective in fighting corruption, there would be no need for the NAB. The task of my administration is to launch the anti-corruption process in order to set other agencies in motion. After all, the 700 employees of NAB alone will not change the government nor overcome corruption. That would be a utopia. However, one of NAB's most important objectives is to break the stereotypes of society accustomed to living in a corrupt environment.

U.W.: NAB has announced the creation of a "corruption registry". Is there already a plan for this project or a model based upon countries where similar plans have been implemented?

– The corruption registry exists, but it is somewhat crude and offers no free access. Moreover, it is currently run by a different authority. NAB will have its own registry. We will probably build the registry jointly with the Ministry of Justice based on the principles of openness. The model is simple: detained – proven guilty – put on the list. NAB website will provide all this information.

Our international partners have initiated many interesting programs, including projects for registering perpetrators of corruption. Poland has had positive experience with communications surveillance. NAB plans to have a staff of workers who personally monitor communications, and the Poles have a computer program that does it. That can save worker hours and get more complete and effective information. Polish experts will come to give a

BIO

Artem Sytnyk was born in Kirovohrad oblast in 1979 and is a graduate of the Yaroslav Mudryi Law Academy. He worked as an assistant prosecutor in the Leninsky district of Kirovohrad before becoming an investigator and later senior investigator. Mr. Sytnyk later served as chief of the investigation department of the Kyiv Oblast Prosecutor's Office, but resigned in 2011 due to "disagreement with the policies of the Yanukovich regime". He opened 300 criminal cases, including those dealing with corruption. He has worked as a lawyer beginning in 2011, and on April 16, 2015 was appointed the first Director of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine

presentation on these programs in late June. We will look at their experience and learn to adapt their methods to fit our needs. Ukraine has over 40 national databases, so it takes analysts who work with detectives two days to process them. Our Georgian colleagues have computer programs that reduce the whole process to just 5 minutes. We also plan to implement such a system, but we will need significant financial resources to create this IT-infrastructure.

U.W.: You mentioned the intent to set up seven regional offices in the most corrupt cities. How is this process advancing? What are the most problematic regions? How you see these offices operating?

– Unfortunately, I can't do everything at once, and NAB still has very limited human resources: just four people. If you take a closer look at the law, you will see that the central management is established first, then the regional offices (actually, NAB headquarters). There, the staff will work with complainants, witnesses, collect information from the public and the mass media. I'm now considering a mobile detective unit in Kyiv, since 70% of the officials being investigated by NAB are located in the capital.

U.W.: In terms of corruption, Ukraine scores 142nd out of 175 countries. Where will it be within a year of your work?

– It is difficult to say. I am a pragmatist and I don't want to engage in populism. I could tell you that we'll find ourselves in second place, but that would be insincere. NAB has specific powers, tasks, and

IT WILL TAKE AT LEAST A YEAR FOR THE NATIONAL BUREAU TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE FORM PROVIDED BY LAW

deadlines provided by law. I would not like to run headlong into this work without the Bureau first taking form, but the present necessity requires rapid results. However, there are units that take more than a year to form. For example, the SBU must provide the equipment for our secret apparatus. But it will take at least a year for the National Bureau to be established in the form provided by law. ■

Express Shock Therapy, Hybrid Economic Results

On the one hand, we see negative data and it is quite justified. GDP, roughly speaking being the net cash that a country can distribute, consume or invest, declined 17.6% in Q1 of 2015, which means that Ukraine is now operating with nearly 20% less cash than a year ago. This is the main wealth that the government can manage in real time, so a drop of 20% is an enormous loss.

In addition to this, industrial output has declined 22%, transport has dropped 23.2%, and construction has plunged 33%. Meanwhile, real salaries have shrunk by 22.5%, while prices soared 40% by April 2015, compared to December 2014 (see **The bad news?**). And whoever knows these numbers, especially those outside Ukraine, looks at them and says, "Good Lord, what a mess! How can people survive in a country like that?" And Vladimir Putin adds: "Time for the third Maidan, my Maidan!"

Let's start with the bad news. According to official financial numbers, at the macroeconomic level, where all the financial and economic streams run together in a society, we will notice that both in the first quarter and over April–May, the government covered all its budgetary commitments in full, paying out wages and supporting institutions involving defense, national security, education and other branches and programs. Local administrations also covered all their budget commitments. There have been no hold-ups in paying pensions or other social benefits.

What's more, the Unified Treasury Account (YeKR) where all contributions to the State Budget go from commercial entities, individuals, physical and legal persons, contains nearly UAH 28 billion today, although at the beginning of the year, the country had only UAH 3 billion. This is the money that is taken in as revenues and distributed further. Part of it is already allocated and is supposed to cover the country's budget commitments, but part of it is surplus, reserve cash, and is supposed to be distributed anew. This is about nearly UAH 18.5bn.

Author:
Vitaliy Melnychuk

This means that Ukraine has not only fulfilled all the commitments to individual citizens and legal entities that it took on in the budget law, but has also accumulated additional financial resources that can now be allocated to other projects within the budget. This money now has to be distributed, which means amending the current budget, as no one can simply go ahead and spend this cash.

Back in 2008, the YeKR also had about that amount of money, although the exchange rate was still UAH 5/USD then, whereas it is now UAH 20/USD. But that money was poorly used. The Government issued one-time pension rises just in the run-up to the 2010 presidential election, taking on colossal commitments that have continued to destroy the balance in the Pension Fund to this day. But today we don't have the option of frittering away this surplus. It's not the time and the options are simply not there.

If we take a look at statistics from the National Bank of Ukraine, at the trade balance and balance of payments, then we can also see a lot of good news there. Yes, exports and imports fell, but exports remain US \$1.193bn higher than imports, something the country has not seen for a very long time. This means that Ukraine brought in more hard currency through trading goods and services than it paid out, which provides the basis for a more stable hryvnia. The deficit in the balance of payments has shrunk severalfold compared to last year and continues to slow down. Since the huge devaluation, currency markets have been

operating steadily. What's more, the hryvnia has even grown stronger and currency reserves are growing (see **The good news**). What should we make of this good news?

The first four months of 2015 were for Ukraine what the early 1990s were for the Poles: shock therapy. For Ukrainians, it was very concentrated and swift, although the impact of this shock was enormous and complicated. According to the UN, which just recently completed a study on the standard of living of Ukrainians, nearly 80% of the people are now at the poverty level, that is, according to UN standards, they are living on less than US \$5 or UAH 105 a day. Business profits have plummeted, manufacturing has plunged into the red, and sales are in the doldrums—on top of the huge devaluation of the hryvnia and double-digit inflation already mentioned. Still, it looks like shock therapy may have also brought some good news (see **The good news**). This was possible, firstly, because of solid financial and macro-economic policy, and secondly because the Finance Ministry and Cabinet acted correctly to balance macroeconomic proportions and the financial situation in the country. And these proper actions put enormous pressure on purchasing power, sharply cutting back consumption among the population and working capital among businesses. Cutbacks in salaries and pensions and an effective halt to lending were the sacrifices that ordinary Ukrainians and Ukrainian business brought to the altar in return for the current macrofinancial stability and the uninterrupted functioning of the country's financial system.

But such sacrifices should not be in vain. Not only because they brought Ukrainians considerable pain in the midst of a war against Russia and its proxies, but more importantly because they provide a basis for carrying out real economic reforms at last. Macroeconomic stability must be in place before any real reforms can be undertaken in individual sectors and areas.

Driving from Zhytomyr to Kyiv recently, trucks carrying brand-new cars, all of them imports, could be seen on the highway for the first time in a long, long while. This signals not only about demand, as there are always some people who have money. The point is that the "elastic importer" waited until the economy was once again in balance, when the



THE BAD NEWS?

Macroeconomic indicators for Ukraine
January-April 2015 as % of January-April 2014

Indicator	% change
Real GDP (Q1)	-17,6
Manufacturing	-21,5
Construction	-32,6
Transport-23	-23,2
Capital investment	-14,8
Real wages	-22,5
Consumer price index (CPI) Apr. 2015 vs Dec. 2014	+40,1

Source: Derzhkomstat

hryvnia was stable again, because a fluctuating hryvnia means that this kind of importer will do nothing. A rise in direct investment in Ukraine since the beginning of the year is another signal that there have been changes at the macro level and real reforms can be undertaken. This means that, war or no war, investors are starting to move again.

WANTED: RATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY

So the first condition for serious reform, macroeconomic stability, is in place. The next step is specific actions in specific sectors in both the economy and the social sphere.

At this stage, it's extremely important to begin easing pressure on demand because a dramatic decline in demand not only means less income for consumers and hardship in their daily lives—both those who are working and those living on pensions—, but it also makes it impossible for businesses to grow. A company can't sell its products when there is no purchasing power.

Right now, what Ukraine needs is for consumption to increase as soon as there are some resources and the shoots of macroeconomic stability become visible. That means removing the most draconian caps on pensions and wages, introducing indexing, dropping the most burdensome taxes, and withdrawing the strictest restrictions on the currency market. A new version of the pension law needs to be passed immediately. Discount rate needs to be reduced and business loans given a jumpstart. The economy has to be slowly liberalized as its current severity no longer corresponds to the current reality. And, of course, that UAH 18.5bn "surplus" needs to be very wisely distributed. Some part of it should go to a critical national project, preferably energy conservation, and another part to stimulate greater consumption using either budgetary or other mechanisms. Preparations should slowly be made for the upcoming fall (local elections are scheduled for October 2015 – **Ed.**), increasing consumption among ordinary Ukrainians so that the country can meet it in a normal fashion. Then there won't be any talk about a "third Maidan." In short, Ukraine needs thoughtful economic policies.

This economic policy should not just be about decentralization and deregulation, but about infrastructure and the very conditions for com-



THE GOOD NEWS

Macroeconomic indicators for Ukraine
January-April 2015 as % of January-April 2014
or at end April 2015

Indicator	change
Budget revenues, %	+30,5
Budget surplus, UAH bn	18,5
Balance on YeKR, UAH bn	27,7
Balance of trade, \$ bn	1193
Fulfillment of budget commitments, %	99,8
Fulfillment of Pension Fund commitments, %	100
Increase in gold and currency reserves for March-May 2015 (as of June 1), USD bn	4318

Source: Derzhkomstat, NBU, Ministry of Finance

mercial activity. That is the key. This economic policy should mean specific projects and specific actions in specific areas. There are not enough of such thoughtful and contemporary actions today. What is worse, it is not clear who personally will actually undertake them. Ukraine's current Government does not even have a deputy premier in charge of economic policy. In fact there has never been such a post. This, as much as anything, demonstrates just how unprepared state institutions are to working positively. But we have to give ordinary Ukrainians their due: they have survived this colossal pressure and the shock, making many sacrifices in order to gain the necessary results, so no one has the right to waste them.

WHY DON'T THE NUMBERS MATCH?

Statistics make sense when they are comparative. If a given company worked last year and is still working now, it is easy enough to compare its results. The same goes for a territory, be it oblast or country. But how can you compare if a territory has changed, when part of it is now occupied and the border keeps shifting? Clearly, that territory that cannot be accounted for has to be excluded. At one point, Ukraine's statistics failed to reflect this but then the adjustments began to be made. A few months after Crimea was taken, statistics came out that no longer included it. Crimea itself once had a republic-level statistics office, but it now works for a different country, so data about the peninsula is no longer forthcoming. With the occupied counties of the Donbas, things are a bit more complicated. When economic statistics are published, there is a footnote stating that

they are "without the counties of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts where the ATO is taking place." But the ATO is also on territories controlled by Ukraine, and there are also areas that are temporarily occupied by Russia. Are they also part of this excluded territory? How precisely is all this calculated? It is impossible right now for any boundary to be precisely established, because some companies were registered on Ukrainian territory while others remained in the occupied areas. There are also doubts about the accuracy of the baseline from 2014 that is being used for comparison purposes. We are talking, more or less, about the economic potential, up to 20% of Ukraine's GDP, that Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast produced prior to the war with Russia. In this situation, to completely rely on basic macroeconomic indicators makes little sense. They are at best simply orientation points. On the other hand, the figures for real money that has been received by the Finance Ministry's institutions are precise data and can be relied on. Of course, there has been devaluation of the hryvnia and inflation. But the money is there: Ukrainians have shifted into a new system of coordinates and this is cash that is "in pocket" and really exists. Yet many do not want to believe these figures. Yes, in her recent meeting with the IMF head of mission, NBU Governor Valeria Hontareva announced that Ukraine has positive indicators for its banking system and hryvnia exchange rate. She stated that Ukraine needs to start slowly easing pressure on consumers and businesses, including the restrictions that were instituted. But they answered her that it was still "too soon" because of the poor macroeconomic indicators.

It is hard to dispute with the IMF representatives, as they use the same statistical data that we provided here (**see The bad news**) and he only sees bad results. After seeing these, they won't even bother looking at the second page (**see The good news**) and they won't be bothered trying to understand our very mixed results. Yet this is what needs to be talked about because right now, Ukraine's economy and other spheres are very much in a "bad news, good news" situation. This is a hybrid reality against the background of a hybrid war and we need to learn to live with it—and take advantage of the situation. We cannot waste this opportunity as it has cost Ukrainians far too much! ■

Healthcare and Education Below Poverty Line

Ukraine will face a complete degradation of public services unless painful but necessary changes take place

While the cost of living in Ukraine is skyrocketing, the financial support for the public and government sectors is decreasing drastically. Most citizens who get their wages from state budgets of all levels have already found themselves below the subsistence level. The budget deficit and the pre-default position of Ukraine don't provide grounds for the increase of payroll budgets in the near future. Without solving this stalemate, that is, the situation when the salaries of government and public sector employees are not sufficient to cover their most basic needs, the quality of the services they provide is bound to deteriorate.

WITHIN THE CONFINES OF POVERTY

The Ministry of Social Policy regularly publishes data on the "actual cost of living." This is a technical indicator used to "monitor the dynamics of the living standards in Ukraine." Whether to give this indicator an official status or not is decided by the Parliament, whose responsibility is to determine a figure of official subsistence level in the annual state budget, a process that is often arbitrary and politically-motivated. In terms of April 2015 prices, this subsistence level amounted to UAH 2,561 or around USD 115 at the current exchange rate (UAH 2,317 net of individual income tax) for able-bodied persons, UAH 1,882 or USD 85 for pensioners, and UAH 2,593 or USD 117 for children under the age of six.

The subsistence level has increased since December 2013 by

Author:
Oleksandr
Kramar

80-98%, while the gross minimum wage rate has remained unchanged, at UAH 1,218 or USD 55. However, this increased subsistence level is in fact that of December 2013, merely adjusted for inflation of the past 18 months. Back then experts already lamented about the obsolescence and divorcement from reality of the methodology used to define the official subsistence level, stressing the need to adapt it to the dictates of the time.

The increased cost of living affected all employees working in the Ukrainian economy. While the minimum wage rate is only indicative in the private sector, since salary levels there are determined by the market rather

to UAH 18,000; in finance and insurance sectors, from UAH 6,500 to UAH 9,700; in information and telecommunications, from UAH 4,500 to UAH 7,100. In other sectors, where private business prevails, such as hospitality, retail trade, construction and transportation, the increase of official salaries was much lower; however, typical for them is a significant gap between reported pay and total reward that includes "enveloped" cash.

Another long-standing problem with the salaries of public sector employees is as follows: their salaries are regulated by the Unified Tariff Scale (UTS), where the basic salary of a first category employee remains at the level of UAH 852 (around USD 38). This is below not only the actual subsistence minimum for the able-bodied (UAH 2,561), but also the minimum wage rate (UAH 1,218) set in the state budget back in December 2013.

As a result, even if dependent children are not taken into account, the overwhelming majority of state employees are already below the subsistence minimum. In April 2015, with the official subsistence minimum for able-bodied employees established at UAH 2,561, accrued average wages in healthcare sector were just UAH 2,536, in education UAH 2,795, and the employees of libraries and other cultural institutions received UAH 2,694. Moreover, most employed in these sectors are paid significantly less than the average salary. For instance, in the education sector, salaries differ by types of institutions, bonuses for academic degrees, extra hours worked, etc. Gross salary of an

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO INCREASE SPENDING ON PAYROLLS OF PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES FROM STATE AND LOCAL BUDGETS

than legislation and considerable amounts are paid unreported in envelopes as "bonuses," for state employees this indicator actually reflects official salaries. According to official statistics, while minimum wage rates remained frozen since the end of 2013, average wages continued to grow in other sectors.

Across the nation, accrued average wages increased from UAH 3,167 (USD 140) to UAH 3,998 (USD 180) between January 2014 and April 2015. In sectors with less shadow income, salaries increased by a factor of 1.5-2: in air transportation, from UAH 9,600

Actual subsistence minimum for the able-bodied to wages in public sectors, April 2015



* Wages of the public and government sector employees are calculated on the basis of the Unified Tariff Scale (UTS) and depend on the basic wage that should meet the minimum wage/minimum subsistence level for the able-bodied.

Sources: Ministry of Social Policy, State Statistics Service

average high school teacher or a medical doctor is usually around UAH 2,000-2,500. Even in categories such as "public administration and defense, compulsory social insurance," that covers a wide range of staff categories, average gross salary in April 2015 amounted to just UAH 3,892.

INSOLVENT BUDGET

It is impossible to increase spending on payrolls of public sector employees from state and local budgets. Despite the recent populist speculations of some politicians about the unprecedented "budget overperformance" in the first months of the year, allegedly allowing for salaries and pensions adjustment for inflation, this situation is in fact only temporary and fragile.

Indeed, the consolidated budget surplus in the first four months of 2015 reached UAH 18.5 bn (which, by the way, equals to only 10% of budget expenditures over this period, and therefore is not the reason for a substantial increase in salaries). But even this surplus was due to temporary factors, which will not exist in the remaining months.

According to the Ministry of Finance, consolidated budget

revenues were higher in those sectors where prices for imported goods increased in hryvnia due to devaluation. Thus, a 30.5% increase in the nominal consolidated budget revenues in January-April 2015 compared with the same period of 2014 was due to the increase of revenues from VAT on imported goods by 54.2%, from excise tax on imported goods by 79.8%, and from import duties by 177.9%. In total, these three budget revenue items brought UAH 58 bn to the state treasury, compared with just UAH 34.4 in the same period of 2014.

However, a further increase of these revenues will be much lower. In the first quarter of 2015, the worst devaluation of the hryvnia took place, with its official exchange rate (used for customs clearance of imported goods) for a long time remaining at UAH 25-30 to the dollar, which is at least 2-2.5 times higher than in the same period of 2014. In the fall of 2014, imported goods were cleared at the rate of 13-16 UAH to the dollar; therefore, to ensure a revenue growth at the Q1'2015 rate, a new round of deep hryvnia devaluation is needed in the fall, at least to the official rate of UAH 30-35

or more to the dollar. So, a similar increase in tax revenues from imported items in the second half of the year will only be possible if the government turns to such extreme economic scenarios.

Besides, almost half of the consolidated budget surplus in January-April 2015 was generated by the fees for the issuance and extension of licenses (mainly permits for 3G networks issued to three mobile operators), which amounted to UAH 8.87 bn compared with UAH 0.16 bn in the same period of the last year. These revenues were one-off and transitory. There are no reasons to expect similar new revenues in the remaining months of this year.

Meanwhile, spending on education and healthcare, only during the first four months of 2015 and even at the current extremely low salary rates in these sectors, amounted to UAH 52.6 bn. In annual terms, the budget would need several hundred billion hryvnia to ensure the necessary tripling of salaries in these sectors, which the budget just doesn't have. And, as evidenced from our further analysis, it will not have the necessary funds in the future either as the tax base is narrowing and a large number

THE PROBLEM OF INADEQUATE TAX BASE FOR THE FINANCING OF EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES ONLY DEEPENS

of employable citizens of Ukraine evade taxes and full-fledged participation in the financing of Ukraine's social infrastructure.

ONE-WAY TRAFFIC

Currently, there are 40-43 million residents in Ukraine (figures vary depending on whether the occupied districts of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts are taken into account). However, less than a third of them pay taxes, even though all of them without exception claim "free social services guaranteed by the Constitution" to be provided at the cost of the state budget. In addition »

to 12.15 mln retirees, who are in their own right, there are a few million "economically inactive people of the working age." Some of these citizens are university and college students, a small share includes those who can't work for health reasons, while the rest are actually quasi-unemployed: 2.4 million are "employed in the household" and another 0.5 million fall into other categories, such as "desperate," "not knowing how to look for a job," etc. Another 1.85 million Ukrainians are officially recognized as unemployed according to the definition of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

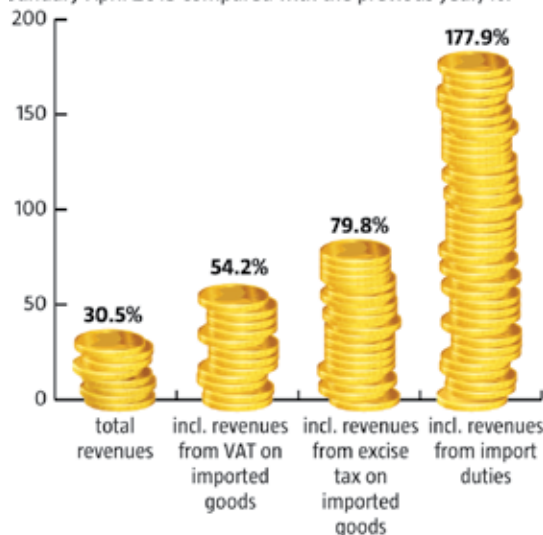
Out of the 17.2 million able-bodied citizens who are formally employed, in 2014 only 8.9 million were employed full-time by enterprises with more than 10 employees, 1.4 million worked for microbusinesses and private entrepreneurs, and another 1.5 million were microbusiness owners and individual entrepreneurs. These 11.8 million taxpayers are the ones who carry the burden of the entire social and public infrastructure (education, healthcare, and public services) in the country of 40 million residents (exclusive of the occupied territories of Donbas).

The remaining 5.4 million of the officially "employed" citizens are farmers working on individual household plots and some other categories of citizens whom the state refuses the status of the unemployed (having part-time, temporary, seasonal jobs, etc.). The State Statistics Service in its surveys defines as "employed" anyone who "worked during the surveyed week for at least one hour," and not only on a paid basis, but also "for free for an enterprise, for family business or on a household plot," as well as those who "formally have a job or a business, but did not work during the surveyed period for any reason." The vast majority of these citizens only pay indirect taxes included in the price of goods and services they consume (VAT, excise tax, etc.). At the same time, they pay practically no income tax or social tax.

In this way, the total number of citizens of the working age who don't pay taxes, but are not

Import-driven budget surplus

Growth of nominal revenues of the consolidated budget in January-April 2015 compared with the previous year, %.



Source: Ministry of Finance

officially considered to be unemployed in 2014 amounted to 8.3 million (2.4 + 0.5 + 5.4), and another 1.85 million were unemployed by the ILO definition. In total, more than 10.1 million people who are not pensioners, disabled or students, pay no taxes to the budget and no social security contributions, but claim free services in the public sector and access to public services on a par with those who make such

the number of people employed by businesses employing over 10 people decreased from 9.5 to 8.1 million. Almost half of them are now employed by state enterprises and institutions, including more than 2.2 million working in state-funded education and healthcare.

This sharp decrease in the number of full-time employees by almost two-thirds was due to the loss of jobs in the territory controlled by the terrorists in Donbas, where the number of such employees decreased from 1.5 to 0.6 million from April 2014 to April 2015. However, even without account for the area of the counterterrorist operation, the decline in the number of full-time employees during this period was significant, amounting to 0.49 million, or 5.5%. The data available for the recent years show that the trend is not new, but is gaining momentum with every coming year. There were 10.6 million full-time employees in March 2012 in Ukraine, inclusive of Crimea and Sevastopol, while in March 2014 there were 9.97 million of them. This means that at that time the decrease rate barely exceeded 5% in two years, whereas now a similar decline happened within a year.

LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT

The problem of inadequate tax base for the financing of education, healthcare and other public services only deepens, and within the current model, this trend will continue. As a result, employees of these sectors will lose any motivation to do their work well and to grow professionally in line with the need of the time. Ukraine will thus face a quiet humanitarian disaster as a result of the complete degradation of education and healthcare services provided to the vast majority of the population.

The processes that are taking place today seem to reflect a dangerous self-deception. Mechanically cutting spending on education or healthcare will result in the destruction of these important sectors and their rapid degradation, whereupon they will no longer be able to function, but will simply imitate the process. What Ukraine actually

THE MAIN REASON FOR THE CURRENT BUDGET SECTOR FINANCING GAP IS THE FACT THAT THE FUNDING IS STILL PROVIDED ALONG THE PATTERNS OF THE CENTRALLY PLANNED SOVIET ECONOMY

contributions from their income on a regular basis. This category almost equals the total number of pensioners (12.15 million) and salaried employees (10.3 million).

Meanwhile, the number of full-time employees who are the main payers of personal income tax and, most importantly, of the contributions to various social funds is steadily declining. Only from April 2014 to April 2015,

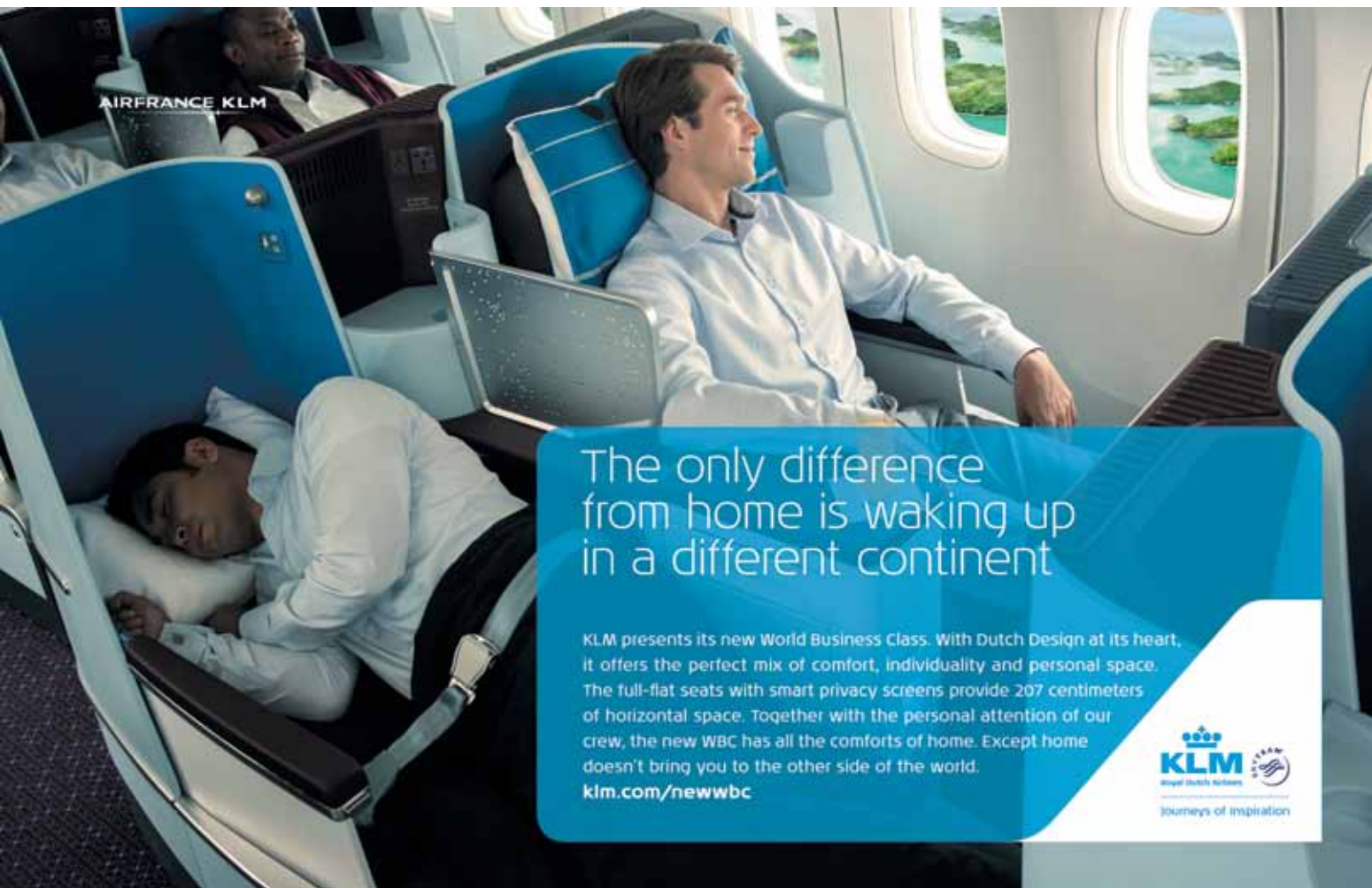
needs is to start calling things by their proper names and bring social standards, minimum wage and the Unified Tariff Scale in line with the actual cost of living. The shortage of funds in the state treasury should not be an obstacle to their long overdue triple increase, as a minimum. However, this increase should not happen at the expense of the state budget, which simply has no resources for it. The problem should be resolved by a radical staff reduction (by two to four times) where possible (bureaucratic apparatus, regulatory authorities, law enforcement authorities). Where it is not possible (education, healthcare), a more differentiated approach is needed. Another solution would be establishing, on a mandatory basis, additional employee remuneration funds partially financed from payments for services by direct customers, or, in case most customers refuse to pay, gradually reducing the number of employees, simultaneously reducing the length of compulsory education (to nine or even five grades), with further

education being fee-based and voluntary, and limiting the amount of services provided by public hospitals free of charge.

Of course, a radical wage increase for public and government sector employees by at least three times will result in the necessary layoffs of those whose wages cannot currently be covered by the deficit-ridden budget and will not be provided by the consumers of their services. According to different estimates, from 0.5 to 1 million currently employed civil servants, teachers and medical doctors will join the official ranks of the unemployed. After all, the main reason for the current budget sector financing gap is the fact that the funding is still provided along the patterns of the centrally planned Soviet economy, while most residents of Ukraine using those patterns are living by the rules of the market economy, trying at the same time to avoid paying taxes and duties by any means and still claiming the free services guaranteed by the Constitution that they had in the Soviet

times. Therefore, solving the problem of financing social allowances, pensions, healthcare or education will only be possible with a new model that would either ensure that anyone using public services pays for them, or make them unavailable to those not willing to pay taxes.

There is no other alternative in the current market situation for overcoming the outrageous poverty of the public and government sector employees. The experience that we already have in other sectors of the economy tells us that bringing prices and tariffs for goods and services to their actual level would cause a substantial reduction in their production and in the number of related jobs. Eventually, those who were laid off will find jobs in their fields of expertise in the private sector or retrain to do other work. Besides, raising the incomes of those employed in education, healthcare and the public sector in general to normal standards will enhance their purchasing power and create additional demand in the market for new jobs. ■



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Journeys of Inspiration

Uncle Xi's Bear Market

China learns that stocks are beyond the Communist Party's control



Before it met a violent end last month, China's stock-market rally was more than just your run-of-the-mill mania. It was political. Many investors called it a "state bull market", believing the government was firmly in control, guaranteeing that shares would only go up. Others said it was an "Uncle Xi bull market", as if it were a gift from China's top leader, Xi Jinping. State media lent their official imprimatur to the frenzy: a People's Daily editorial in May, shortly before the bubble popped, predicted the good times were just beginning.

Buying stocks "is buying the Chinese dream", proclaimed a top brokerage.

The plunge of nearly a third over the past four weeks has left the dream in tatters. Although the market is still up by 75% over the past year, many mom-and-pop investors were late to the party. Less than a fifth of respondents to a large online survey by Sina, a web portal, reported making any money from stocks this year.

For the government, the fall is damaging. Officials are seen to have promised the population a bull market, only to lure them

into a bear trap. A flourishing of gallows humour in mobile-phone chat groups captures the sentiment. "Friends, don't run, we're here to save you," cry the valiant soldiers in one joke, representing the state coming to the aid of the beleaguered market. Their refrain soon turns to, "Friends, don't run, or we'll shoot you."

The warning signs had been flashing for some time. ChiNext, a venue for high-growth companies, reached a price-to-earnings multiple of 147 at its height in early June, in the same region as American tech stocks during the dotcom bubble of the late 1990s.

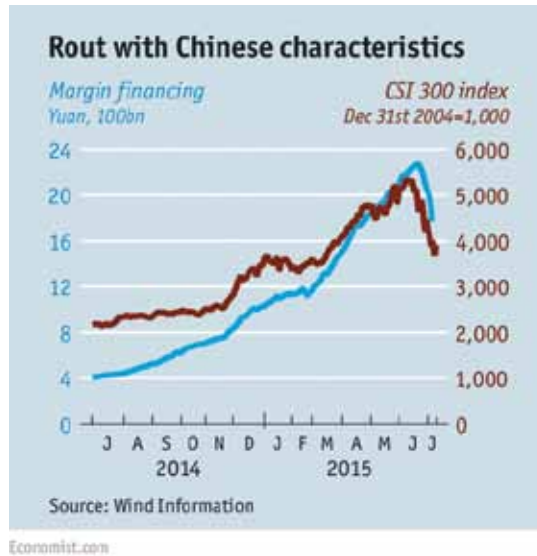
When share prices started falling, many assumed that regulators would stay on the sidelines and let the correction unfold. But policymakers lost their nerve after the market fell by nearly 20% and negative headlines started to pile up, even in the domestic press.

Attempts to steady the market have been frantic and largely futile. Interest rates have been cut; short-selling capped; IPOs halted; share-buying schemes, backed by central-bank cash, hatched. "We have the conditions, the ability and the confidence to preserve stockmarket stability," blared the People's Daily, as the rout continued.

The CSI 300, an index of China's biggest listed companies, fell by 16% in the eight trading days after the rate cut. Some USD3.5 trillion was erased from China's stockmarkets, more than the entire value of all listed firms in India. By the end of July 7th trading in over 90% of Chinese stocks had been suspended, either at the request of the firms concerned or because they had tumbled by the daily limit of 10%. "The government won't let us take our money out of the market, and we don't have the confidence to put any more into it," says Wei Xinguo, a chef at a noodle restaurant in Shanghai and one of the country's 90m stockmarket investors.

The preponderance of punters like Mr. Wei makes Chinese stockmarkets volatile. Retail investors account for as much as 90% of daily turnover—the inverse of developed markets, where institutions dominate. But the government's inability to calm things down despite such heavy-handed intervention is unprecedented. It stems from the degree to which the rally was predicated on debt (**see Rout with Chinese characteristics**).

At its peak, margin financing reached 2.2 trillion yuan (USD355 billion), or about 12% of the value of all freely traded shares on the market and 3.5% of China's GDP. Both proportions are "easily the highest in the history of global equity markets", according to Goldman Sachs. With Chinese shadow banks and peer-to-peer lenders



also offering cash to investors, the actual amount of leverage in the market is likely to have been even higher. That helped propel the original rally. It is now compounding the downturn as investors scramble to sell their holdings to cover their debts.

The sharpness of the slide has raised worries that Chinese growth itself is about to fall off a cliff. Mercifully, the stockmarket appears to be as disconnected from economic fundamentals on the way down as it was on the way up. At the same time as shares nearly tripled from the middle of 2014 until early June, China slouched to its slowest year of growth in more than two

LIKE ANY BIG, SOPHISTICATED ECONOMY, CHINA NEEDS A HEALTHY EQUITY MARKET

decades. In the past couple of months the economy has actually started to improve. A burst of government spending on infrastructure looks to have stabilised the industrial sector; property prices, long in the doldrums, have started to tick up again.

The stockmarket is still just a small part of the Chinese economy. The value of freely floating shares is about a third of GDP, compared with more than 100% in most rich countries. Stocks account for just 15% of household assets, so their slump should have limited impact on

consumption. The systemic consequences of the margin debt are also limited. The funding has come from brokers, not banks, and equates to less than 1.5% of total bank assets.

There will undoubtedly be some spillover from the panic. Futures contracts for raw materials from lead to eggs fell by their daily limit on July 8th as investors sold to realise some cash. On international markets, the price of iron ore, which China consumes the bulk of, slid. Yet risks of a systemic nature remain remote.

The long-term consequences could be severe, however. Like any big, sophisticated economy, China needs a healthy equity market. For investors from households to pension funds, stocks should, in theory, provide a better return over time than low-yielding bank deposits. For companies, equity financing is an important alternative to bank loans, helping to reduce their reliance on debt. The scrutiny and rules that come with a share listing should also help improve corporate governance.

Before the crash, China was inching towards reforms that would fix some of the distortions in its market. A programme launched last year connected markets in Hong Kong and the mainland markets. Though subject to strict quotas, it promised to introduce more of an institutional presence on China's exchanges. Regulators had stepped up supervision of insider trading and had also planned to change the way initial public offerings work, giving firms more control over the timing and size of their listings. But as the government's all-out, if inept, response to the crash shows, it is reluctant to cede control.

Meanwhile, the crash has scarred a generation of investors. Xu Pengfei, a 25-year-old fitness coach, put 100,000 yuan in the market in April, two months before the crash. He managed to get out before losing any money but has no plans to reinvest. "I don't have much faith now." ■

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We Can Win After All



Authors:
**Roman Malko,
Valeria Burlakova**

Ukrainian history is mostly known for its tragic parts. The glorious pages are often neglected. Today, we are witnessing the nation that is once again undergoing painful yet fascinating transformations. While a large part of Ukrainian territory is still being tormented by the enemy, bringing peace will take huge efforts and hard work, and hypocrisy, problems and confusion from the hybrid nature of the conflict seem frustrating, stories of heroism, sacrifice and devotion, abound. *The Ukrainian Week* spoke to participants of the war in the East to show episodes of victory – just a few of the many feats that must not be forgotten. ■

Krasnyi Lyman

On June 3, 2014, the counterterrorist operation (ATO) forces launched the operation to liberate Krasnyi Lyman, a town of a little over 20,000 residents, in Donetsk Oblast. By June 5, the Ukrainian flag was once again raised on the town council building and local police administration. Dmytro Mokletsov took part in that operation as member of the 25th airborne brigade. He shared the story of how it began, and of the battles on the town's fringes.

"This was our first fight, a baptism by fire. We were ordered to liquidate the sniper point in Krasnyi Lyman outskirts, then to move further into town. We left our position at 3 a.m. A National Guard unit with combat vehicles was to accompany us. It was the first fight for all of us so everyone was afraid. We were moving in a column; it was raining heavily. Our eyes were big and round with fear. As we got closer to the road leading to Lyman, we saw the 95th or the 80th brigade – not sure which one exactly – shelling the woods to make



Mariupol: flags on the balconies

Ukrainian forces pushed the Russia-backed separatists from Mariupol, a city of 500,000, on June 13, 2014. The major part of the operation was carried out by Azov, a battalion then reporting to the Interior Ministry and later formally going under the umbrella of the National Guard (it is soon to be reorganized into a special-task brigade).

"On that day, we were together with the National Guard and Dnipro-1 battalion," recalls one Azov fighter, Bayda. "Our part of the operation was the storming while the National Guard and Dnipro-1 units made a cordon around the city. They were supposed to do the mopping-up following the storming. Eventually, however, the command had the National Guard withdrawn. I don't know about orders for Dnipro-1. All I know is that Azov, too, participated in the mopping-up of Mariupol."

According to Bayda, the terrorists had set up their fortified sector at the crossroads of Hretska and Georgiivska streets. "... I remember the first explosion – a VOG fragmentation grenade shot from an under barrel grenade launcher. It exploded right by the feet of one of our fighters. He was seriously injured. We were just getting off our KamAZ trucks," Bayda says. Despite the difficult beginning, the Ukrainian forces took Mariupol with virtually no losses. Noone was killed, Bayda says, and several fighters were injured, one gravely.

"We had a sense of a triumph because we pretty much didn't count on anyone but ourselves," Bayda recalls. "The plan to liberate Mariupol was developed by six of our commanders, including battalion commander Andriy Bilteskiy. We had previously rehearsed the operation at



our training field, building the copy of the separatist barricades on the crossroads, according to our reconnaissance reports. We rehearsed moving around the place, throwing grenades and taking it under control to make all of it more of a reflex... But we were pretty much amateurs when we moved to the actual action."

After the storming of the fortified barricades and the adjacent districts, the group headed back to the trucks to move to the city airport. "That was when we noticed the first blue-and-yellow flags appearing on balconies," Bayda recalls with a smile. "It was then that Mariupol

surprised us with its pro-Ukrainian position. A few months later, in September, it surprised us even more. At that point, only few of our and National Guard servicemen were in town – that's peanuts in terms of actual effective defense. But the locals began to rally for Ukraine, volunteered to join the battalion en masse and helped fortify the city defense line. A huge number of people responded to our calls for help. The locals pretty much built the city defence line with their own hands."

...The liberation of Mariupol was declared in June. Donetsk Oblast State Administration was then relocated there.

sure we are not ambushed from there, making a corridor for us. We stopped and fired a few shots too. That place was close to the water tower where the separatist snipers were operating. Still, we soon found ourselves caught in an ambush.

As the separatists started shelling us from the woods, the National Guard turned around and left. They claimed later that they had no order to shoot and accompanied us more for a crowd effect. We took the fight. I was deputy commander, mechanic and machine gun operator of our BMD. We were ordered to shell the closest separatist checkpoint. I fired nine shots and the checkpoint was gone. Suddenly, I realized that our infantry group was hiding behind the BMD, using it as a shield from something. For some reason, they could not leave that shield – there was constant shooting coming from one flank. Behind the checkpoint was a two-story building, its win-

dows on the second floor covered up with sacks of sand. From a tiny window amidst those sacks was a machine gunner shooting at the group. I loaded the BMD cannon, although I'd never done that before, and fired. I knew the trajectory of the warhead only in theory. As it flew I heard everyone in the BMD praying: as if in a slow motion episode, the warhead hit exactly that tiny window. Everything there collapsed, and I lost control for a moment. We took over the checkpoint with no losses on our side and moved on. Our artillery was stationed near Krasnyi Lyman, and we ended up on the outskirts, across the road from the local plant. That's where we made our fortified constructions. We had reports that there were separatists inside the plant. Their scouts tried to get to our positions at night but we spotted them thanks to the thermal scopes volunteers had bought for us. The separatists then tried to shell us. At

one point, we caught two of them – both with Russian passports and military IDs, one carrying just a Makarov gun with him, and another one – a knife and a binocular. They told us they were picking mushrooms in the woods, but we didn't believe them, so we put them in jail and notified the Security Service. We didn't torture them, they got very humane treatment from us. They were fed exactly what we ate ourselves. We just had them help us dig trenches.

For the next two weeks, there were no big shellings at our checkpoint. In general, there were no huge battles in Krasnyi Lyman, unlike some other places. But it was just the beginning of the big war. Hardly any heavy equipment or tanks involved. The most powerful equipment we had for shooting was mortars. Eventually, we squeezed the separatists on both flanks and they moved towards Donetsk."

Attack on Luhansk: observe, don't shoot...



The move of the Ukrainian military towards the occupied Luhansk launched in mid-July 2014 had every chance of a brilliant and rapid victory. Missing in that operation was apparently the wisdom and will of the top army commanders and the State leaders, but definitely not the heroism and sacrifice of Ukrainian soldiers who reclaimed a big chunk of Luhansk Oblast territory at the cost of enormous efforts and their lives. Yuriy, a member of the Kyiv-12 battalion, took part in the fighting and shared his story with *The Ukrainian Week*.

"The march on Luhansk started from Shchastia for us, followed by Krasnyi Yar, Berhunka, Stanytsia Luhanska, and expanding further to the south, towards Donetsk, but I wasn't there. The fighting was ongoing. We got ourselves firm positions in Shchastia and moved over to Vesela Hora which is 5 kilometers from the town. That was the first spot where we were shelled with GRADs. Previously, they had been targeting some distant objects: apparently,

the separatists hadn't know how to operate them properly at that point. At Vesela Hora we were first shelled as a close target. That's why we had many injured and our first "200" – the GRADs were covering everything around us. Every single day. We had a great Independence Day on August 24: the GRADs were shelling us from early morning till 7 p.m. non-stop.

At Vesela Hora with us were the National Guard and artillery groups. We built a miniature underground town there. Today, the Russia-backed militants are there. It is a very convenient location: you can see Shchastia and Luhansk (it's around 15km from the city center) from atop the hill. By the way, the separatists had tons of Russian weapons. I've personally seen NSV heavy machine guns. We had none of those.

We took many prisoners in Krasnyi Yar. Those days were very difficult: the first time our battalion was shelled so heavily. When the enemy realized that Krasnyi Yar was lost to it, it

started shelling their own groups, even blew up its own APC.

When the march on Luhansk began, our intention was to get around it (it was possible), strike from the frontiers and divide it into two parts. We could have fought back this oblast center city. However, there was no order to do that even as we were approaching the airport. In Verhunka we faced a heavy storming attack: we guarded the road and the railroad because it was not a simple checkpoint, but a fortified sector. There is no other way to get to Luhansk, but through it.

We were standing there until the very last moment, until separatist tanks moved on us. We saw the first "humanitarian convoy" crystal clear from our position. It was unloaded, and at 2 a.m. that night the separatists launched their tank attack. We tried to reach out to our artillery groups that were supposed to cover us up but the support wasn't there. Then we tried to contact the police between Verhunka and Krasnyi Yar – they were gone too. It was then that we realized that we were facing tanks with nothing more than machine guns, so we were forced to relocate. We had no adequate equipment, only the passenger mini buses mobilized for war – and even those were all covered in scotch tape seal the broken windows. We were leaving the position under heavy shelling, taking all we could with us and leaving the rest. I remember driving past the field and sunflowers exploding all around. And I remember that I didn't even care because there was no way and nowhere to escape from that mini bus. We could have liberated Luhansk. But the order was to stay and observe. I've hated that "observe" thing ever since. That first "humanitarian convoy" played the decisive role.

Liberating Dzerzhynsk

On July 21, 2014, a Ukrainian flag was once again flown over the freed Dzerzhynsk, a town of around 34,000 people. The successful liberation campaign was carried out by the storming group of the military special-task force supported by the National Guard. Lieutenant colonel and war reporter Petro Hasay took part in the operation and told the story.

"We drove to the town at around 6 a.m. Our servicemen dispersed and began to approach the town administration where, according to our reconnaissance report separatist headquarters was located, district by district. We met the locals and very few cars on our way. Two cars did not respond to our order to stop, so we fired at their wheels. It proved to be a good guess: the cars were with armed separatists. A few hundred meters from the administration building our group was detected and sepa-



Popasna: without a single shot

Counterterrorist forces took Popasna, a strategic railroad junction of about 22,000 residents in Luhansk Oblast, on July 22, 2014. On that same day, Severodonetsk, an industrial cluster in Luhansk Oblast, was liberated as well. According to Anton Gerashchenko, Counsel to the Interior Minister, Popasna was liberated by groups of the Ukrainian military and National Guard, but "Donbas, the 3rd battalion reporting to the National Guard, was the main striking force".

"We had three attempts to take Popasna. On the third time, we entered with no fighting," shares Dmytro Riznychenko, a member of the Donbas-Ukraine volunteer battalion (now part of the Ukrainian military) who then fought in the ranks of Donbas, a volunteer battalion operating under the umbrella of the National Guard. "I arrived at the base in Artemivsk when our battalion was returning from yet another fight for Popasna. Some of our fighters were killed. Back then, I was at a training unit and hadn't received weapons yet. I begged my friend to give me his machine gun, hopped on the bus and volunteered to go with the storming group."

Dmytro never found out which military group helped the volunteers then, but he says that it did provide support. "There was a tank – not ours, for sure. Most likely, one from the military. The rest of the convoy was ours. We stopped near Popasna, stayed in the field for a while, got closer, stopped again. It was very hot, we were all thirsty, but we had to wait. The tank then moved ahead but did not shoot. We moved to the spot where the previous fight had taken place and found many shells on the ground



but no bodies of our people. Then, we spotted a separatist checkpoint demolished by our artillery earlier, but it was empty. Once in the town our storming groups began to mop up buildings, and I headed to the town center. I couldn't understand whether there were really no separatists in the town or they just set up an ambush. Then I realized that even if I returned, my own battalion

could shoot me before recognizing me. The town was empty – no dogs, no cats, no people... Suddenly, I saw an SUV with battalion commander Semenchenko, he waved at me, I got in and we rushed to the center. There we saw people with Ukrainian flags... That was our third attempt to take the town – and we finally did, no shots fired."

ratists fired from the adjacent buildings. We started shooting in response, mopped them up quickly, took several prisoners, and occupied the administration building rapidly. It was no more than 20 minutes from the moment we entered the town until the administration was ours. That was the storming group of the special task force in action. They are true masters, perfect team-players.

Within the town administration were about 10 hostages – women, older people and young boys. We took shooting positions, set up the covering outpost and began to search the building for separatists and explosives. Floor by floor, room by room. The minute we got on the roof and started raising the Ukrainian flag – our gunner went to the flagpole to remove the "Donetsk People's Republic" flag – a sniper, then a machine gunner fired at him. We took our positions on the floors and exits while the separatists began to move their reserves closer to the place and shoot. They had the ar-

moured APC 70, an amphibious BMD and two tanks helping them. They surrounded us and started shelling: all we could hear was only noise coming from the corridor between the cabinets. We had no idea which side they were going to storm the building from. The tanks shot over 20 times at us. It's ok when the tank shoots at the exterior wall. It's much worse when it reaches the window or an interior wall. One tank shot at our floor, about three meters from us, the blast sending me and the commander flying.

Our military showed no sign of doubt or fear and gave proper response. We lasted around six hours. When the separatists realized they would not manage to kick us out, they put the second floor on fire. Then, our most combat-ready members stayed there to keep the separatists away, while the rest along with the freed hostages went to the basement.

We were waiting for support groups to arrive. The separatists were not idling either:

they blocked the road, set up ambushes and closed the railway crossing. It took time to unblock with those, while we had been waiting for eight hours already, 30 of us against their group of over 150 people with armoured combat vehicles. In all that time, just three of us were slightly injured and none killed. We fulfilled the headquarters' order to take over the administration building, keep it under our control and free the hostages with no losses. As we were fending off the separatists, Girkin (Igor Strelkov, a Russian-native leader of the separatists who is now in Russia – Ed.) wrote on his social media page: "Thirty brazen Ukropros wanted to take over the town administration in Dzerzhynsk and burned alive in the basement." Only we didn't.

When our support group approached, the separatists realized that their rear would be blocked and once they were encircled, we would hit as well. They abandoned their equipment and fled to Horlivka, a nearby town."

Maryinka: a jewel in the crown

Maryinka is a strategic town of around 10,000 people, adjacent to the Petrovsky district of Donetsk and a potential launching pad for the liberation of Donetsk. It was freed by the counterterrorist forces on August 5, 2014. The victory was difficult, one volunteer killed (member of Azov, a Russian-citizen) and 14 wounded (9 in the explosion of the Ukrainian tank on the anti-tank mine). As Ukrainian forces were mopping-up Maryinka, they were constantly shelled by GRADs and heavy mortars. In fact, as the Ukrainian forces stormed the separatist checkpoint where an ambush had been arranged, the enemy artillery was shelling both the Ukrainian forces, and their own.

"We got to Olenivka (Volnovakha County of Donetsk Oblast – Ed.) where we met the 51st armoured infantry brigade. They had a very cool commander," shares Bayda, an Azov fighter. "The liberation of Maryinka lasted all day, and continued into the night: we found ourselves in an ambush almost at night in the suburbs of Donetsk."

"Those battles were huge for us," Bayda recalls. "Of course, we already had some experience and training. But it was a really tough operation. In fact, we took Maryinka thanks to our determination and enthusiasm. The operation had been planned and looked very clear on the map. But in action our radio communication turned into a chaos, coordination



was bad. Yet, we managed to get to the Donetsk city line and occupy the checkpoint. The next day, the 51st brigade set up its own checkpoints there. Unfortunately, we had our first "200". Unlike in Mariupol, the Azov battalion did not stay long in Maryinka. "Our main responsibility is the southern front, sector M," Bayda says. "In a vast assault launched at the end of this winter, we

freed Pavlopil, Kominternova and Shyrokyne, and pushed the frontline closer to Novoazovsk. Then, we concentrated in Shyrokyne."

In summer 2015, the 28th brigade of the Ukrainian Army managed to keep Maryinka under control in a very challenging combat situation. According to a BBC journalist, this June battle was the worst since the signing of Minsk-2.

Pisky: taken over by determination

The village of Pisky in the suburbs of Donetsk switched hands many times. It was only in July 2014 that the Ukrainian forces finally took it under control. The official news of this came from the counterterrorist operation press-center on July 21, although they did not specify who stormed the village. At that point, Pisky was a reliable rear for the "cyborgs" in Donetsk airport. Yet, it remains a fairly important location till this day, providing control over ways to the Karlivske water reservoir (on June 7, 2014, the Russia-backed terrorists captured the territory around the reservoir and were demanding the staff to open flood-gates at gunpoint. That would have resulted in the flooding of six towns around – Ed.).

A member of Dnipro-1's squadron 5 told us off-record that his group stormed Pisky having no respective orders. Only later did the Right Sector and 93rd brigade groups join them in the village.

"Luckily, we had taken the bridge line with the support of tanks previously (the

Republic Bridge between Pisky and Pervomayske – Ed.). Then, pretty much upon our own initiative, we headed to Pisky, pushing the separatists to the slah heap where they have their fortified barricades now. We began to build our own trenches there but were ordered to retreat. So, we stayed in the village. As far as I know, our battalion had never been ordered to go there officially. We held our positions in



Pisky for several months with no rotation."

The fighter cannot confirm or deny the statement of Volodymyr Shylov, commander of the Dnipro-1's squadron 5, from July 2014 where he said that the Ukrainian forces were ordered to leave Pisky after they had taken the village under control. Shylov refused to do that. "I have made it clear that we are not running back and forth, but staying there to the very end," the commander said. By the way, most squadron 5 members are originally from Donetsk Oblast.

Now, Dnipro-1, as well as Sich, another battalion reporting to the Interior Ministry, have been withdrawn from Pisky. The Rights Sector and OUN were forced to retreat as well given the unresolved situation around legalization of volunteers in the ranks of the Ukrainian forces. Today, the village that undergoes daily shelling is under control of the 93rd brigade with Carpathian Sich, originally a guerilla squadron that has been stationed in Pisky since the fall of 2014 and integrated into the 93rd brigade.



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Rely on Yourself

What is the portrait of the generation that wants to change the country and is doing exactly that, despite all the difficulties, frustrations and pain? Who are the people who won't be stopped and will volunteer to take the burden of change? Where is the limit of their enthusiasm and how long will their energy last? How do they assess the current situation in Ukraine and where do they see as the recipe of victory? **The Ukrainian Week** spoke to a number of activists, volunteers, politicians and the military in an attempt to draw a collective image of the Revolution of Dignity generation. We asked them to answer three questions:

1. What were your expectations of the Maidan, have they materialized?
2. To what extent is the young generation of politicians West-oriented?
3. What and how long are you willing to do for Ukraine's future?

Ihor Lutsenko,
MP with Batkivshchyna faction



1. I had exceeded expectations with regard to the Maidan. Some of them had been satisfied, others - not. I had hoped for Yanukovich to resign. This is what really happened. I had expectations of us changing the system, but that has proven to be a little more challenging. Generally, Maidan is still on, though in a different form. Thus, it is too early to estimate its results. Maidan has given people a real chance to influence the authorities, to create a more progressive rule of the people, rather than a verbal one, and to get rid of several odious figures, of course.

2. The new generation of politicians in power is too West-oriented, while Ukraine gets too little help from the West. We need more military help. Ukraine is getting some financial assistance, but the West should require retaliatory actions from Ukrainian authorities that must take those actions given the billions of dollars the country is receiving. I hope the West will help us to change. Currently, it is hard to expect real profound changes given the quality of the people in power. They hardly demonstrate strong will to change things, but pressure of circumstances sometimes pushes them to do so.

3. I am willing to do everything in my capacity, which means submitting bills to the Parliament in my role as MP. This is what I do. I have a number of initiatives on reforms in key areas.

Interviewed
by
Roman Malko,
Maria Beliyeva

Yehor Firsove,
MP with the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko



1. A revolution can change those in power overnight, but it can't do the same with the system that has been built for decades. That sort of change happens through evolution: I realize that despite of the Maidan and new opportunities it has presented for us, the system has not fully changed. It remains Soviet, corrupt and sometimes criminal. The key achievement of the Maidan is the emergence of new civil society that dictates its demands to the state. In the 2004 Orange Revolution, unlike the 2014 one, people were fascinated with politicians and their slogans. A lot has changed from

Mist'ers, and for society, journalists and activists.

2. Should Ukraine join the European Union, the Eurasian one or create a new one? This question was rhetoric just a year or two ago, while now the answer is obvious for all political forces and generations. Ukraine's way leads to Europe. Young generation is learning and will be ready to assume responsibility for laying a European path soon.

3. Currently, we are witnessing the fight between the newly formed democratic, almost European political system, and the old one. I have experience working in the Verkhovna Rada of the previous convocation, and I can see a clear difference. In that one, I barely had any allies with the mindset similar to mine. In the current one, I have plenty. They are learning, gaining experience and sometimes making mistakes. I am sure the new generation will get rid of the old system. It is the one in charge of laying Ukraine's path to Europe. I think that the aspiration for change will last as long as it takes to get that change. But that takes a huge amount of work, and first of all, it takes real changes and reforms. We have to take these steps, no matter how painful they are.

**EVERY PERSON HAS
TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS
OR HER SPECIFIC AREA
AND TO DELIVER RESULTS IN IT**

then to now. Today, people require changes including the abolition of MP immunity, boosting for small and medium-sized business, and reforms in the law enforcement sector. The State is obliged to respond to these demands. Our current task is not to look for someone to blame for our failed expectations. Instead, we must unite efforts to specify what changes the country needs and to implement reforms together. It is crucial to set out further post-Maidan tasks both for the President, Parliament and Cabinet of

Andriy Levus,
Deputy Chief of Maidan Self-Defense and MP with the People's Front



1. We expected Ukraine to defend its independence and European choice, and to have a real revolution by changing

not only those in power, but the system – in order to make the retreat to Soviet times impossible. We wanted justice too. Unfortunately, this aspiration has not been fully accomplished.

2. Every country acts based on its interests in the world. Nobody will help Ukraine unless they see some interest in this conflict. It is absurd to blame the West, while we have not done our homework. Ukraine is to demonstrate its will to win to get the West active. We demand sanctions, while Ukraine itself has not introduced any sanctions against Russia yet.

3. I think that every person has to be responsible for his or her specific area and to demonstrate results in it. The Verkhovna Rada has already passed several of my draft laws, improving and modernizing the activity of the Foreign Intelligence Service and the Security Service Bureau. I am going to progress in this direction.

Volodymyr Kukhark,
Senior Lieutenant, deputy commander at the 12th squadron of the 26th brigade, head of the Ukrainian Alternative NGO



1. I have not thrown Molotov cocktails. I considered that my mission on the Maidan was to be there at the time of danger and to protect the protests. I also wanted to present information from the ground, to show that the Maidan is not scary and that victory is possible. Ukrainian Alternative was raising for equipment and publishing Maidan-Info bulletin. I never doubted that the Maidan would get rid of Yanukovich. This expectation was met. I also hoped that the Maidan would become a world phenomenon where the most daring ideas are implemented, and that new people and politicians of new quality would emerge. Instead, opposition politicians from within the system controlled the stage. While Maidan activists were calling Yatsenyuk-Tyahnobok-Klychko trio, en masse people swallowed propagandistic baits. Then, voters elected Poroshenko, the most conservative figure with regard to revolution. In fact, the prospect of changes, emotional or material discomfort makes most people distrustful and fearful. So, political campaigns, television and thick purses are still having a lot of influence on voters. Profound change won't come until peo-

ple stop voting for the lesser evil and choose candidates that can actually deliver results.

2. Western politicians have their interests, namely pragmatic business needs, preservation of jobs in their countries and voters' preferences. Neither for Ukraine, nor for anyone else will they do anything to contradict these interests. We can count only on ourselves. Sometimes, it seems like our authorities only care about not upsetting Western partners, and not of national interests. Western partners seem to be worried of nothing but the end of the conflict. Just like on the Maidan, they are ready to pay any price for the illusory peace, even if it means sacrificing our territory and values.

3. It will be a year in August since I joined the military and the counterterrorist operation as part of it. I am at the right place and at the right time. I might continue military service after demobilization but I'm still contemplating how I could do that with the current imperfect, unclear contracts in the military, and the prospect of a long-lasting "special period" – the war. Before it, I was an activist for four years, and have been volunteering lately. I am prepared to continue this, and probably spending some more time with my family. As one-time civil servant, I could work within the state machine. But I don't see a leader or a government with which I would be willing to assume responsibility as an official person without serious compromises on principles. I would happily write a book about Taras Shevchenko and elites. But taking six months for research in our current circumstances is unaffordable luxury.

Andriy Shevtsov,
Maidan activist, injured in clashes on Hrushevs'koho Street, member of the Azov battalion since July 2014



1. Like all Ukrainians, I expected full change of those in power, reforms, demolition of corruption and quick European integration. Unfortunately, nothing has changed. We have different people sitting on the same old golden toilets, plus the war. That's why I see and feel how much worse it has become. People have kicked out one group of corrupt officials and oligarchs, and another one has come to replace it.

2. I don't believe in any assistance from the West. We shouldn't expect it to provide us with free weapons or an army of peacekeepers in Eastern Ukraine. They're already helping by choking Russia with sanctions – we appreciate that. I think that's the most Europe is prepared to do for Ukraine.

3. I stood on the Maidan until the very end. Now, I've quit everything: my studies, an interesting job on TV and in filmmaking, personal relationship, and went to the east. I plan to stay here until the end of the war.

Yulia Smirnova,
volunteer



1. None of my expectations came true after the Maidan. The same people are in the same offices. Patriots are in jails, protesting volunteers are blamed of playing into the Kremlin's hands. I expected change. In the first place, corruption should have been demolished. True patriots should have ascended to power, not those wearing embroidered shirts and shouting "Glory to Ukraine". Who's to blame for that? Us. We never finished what we started. The crowd bought po-

IF WE RELY ON THE WEST ALONE, WE WILL GO ON COUNTING THE BODIES OF OUR HEROES FOR A VERY LONG TIME

litical campaigns before elections, while the handful of people who could actually change something focused on helping the army. Some went to fight in the east, and others, like me, started to help them.

2. If we rely on the West alone, we will go on counting the bodies of our heroes for a very long time. We can have profound change only by uniting efforts – and we have proven that many times. But that's not what those in power want. Because that will show them that we are the power and we are the ones who can build the country.

3. People who know me realize that I have done and am doing a lot for Ukraine. Taking care for orphans – children are our future after all – ongoing participation in various political rallies for justice, assistance to the army from the very beginning of the war. I would also like to change something in the government.

Olha Reshetylova,
volunteer at the Return Alive fund



1. I expected a total change of the oligarch and corrupt law enforcement system after the Maidan. Unfortunately, it only swayed a little, then bounced back to normal quickly. The Maidan failed to provide a leader who was ready for presidential work, and we didn't have any alternatives when the election took place in May 2014.

2. The last 18 months made even the most West-oriented Ukrainians skeptical or Europe, even the whole of the West. In this, we have to distinguish between the mercantile and cynical Western politics, and the system of values on which the entire world is based. We are interested in the latter. As to the pivot of young politicians – they vary too. Mykola Levchenko, Oles Dovhyi, Svitlana Zalishchuk and Yehor Sobolev are all of practically the same age. But their views are opposite. So, we shouldn't think that all young Ukrainians aspire to turn the country into a European state with no exceptions. Voters should be careful with young politicians too.

3. I quit my job, hardly see my family and sometimes risk my life – that's what I've been doing for Ukraine this past year. But, of course, I want to do other things. I want to channel my energy into building civil society, searching for a dialogue within Ukraine, and promoting the brand of Ukraine in the world, not into the war.

Vitaliy Kolomiychuk,
Maidan activist, lawyer



1. My aspiration to the change the government, lay a new vector for Ukraine and establish the system of real power of the people has partly come true. In reality, we failed to establish the power of the people: we missed the moment and allowed old bitter corrupt people into the government.

2. Compared to our first and second liberation struggles, the West is giving us a great hand. It's just that we are too lazy to introduce

sanctions against Russia. Is Ukraine acting correctly on the international arena? I think it is, but it could be far more active. In the first place, however, we should focus on our own force. It is the strong that others choose to ally with. The weak can be abandoned any time.

3. I've drafted a few bills, including on lustration. I have set up several online platforms for discussion and proposing amendments. One is the Declaration of Integrity, a platform where criteria and integral processes of lustration in Ukraine are debated. Anti-corruption Checkpoint is for private complaints against officials and the right of citizens to draw up respective protocols correctly. Before that, I volunteered using my own finance. We will not stop, we will work as long as it takes.

Ostap Stasiv,
civil activist, co-founder of the Maidan Open University



1. I didn't have expectations on the Maidan. It was more of an intention to change the order that was ruining my life and my country. Then, it grew into an understanding and a vision of the future that I want for myself in the context of my state, our identity. The Maidan was extremely important not only for Ukraine, but for the whole world. Today is no time for frustration, and failures I blame on myself, on my inability to press hard enough, to communicate my stance well enough, or to be effective enough. But whatever doesn't kill us makes us stronger. That's why our paradigm of thinking will topple that of our opponents, and that will happen very quickly. It's pure physics, and nature is not easy to overturn.

**THE ASPIRATION FOR CHANGE
WILL LAST AS LONG AS IT TAKES
TO GET THAT CHANGE**

2. Other countries respond to our attempt very adequately, but that response is framed by their understanding of the world. That's why it often looks insufficient to us. They are not catching up with us, they haven't had such radical conceptual changes in their mentalities in recent history. As a

result, the international community is cautious and rational. To them, we are still something like an UFO, and they suddenly have to adjust to the fact that we exist. We are their chance for an exit from the overwhelming crisis.

3. Activists are changing the country rapidly while politicians and civil servants (homo sovieticus and political business) continue to imitate practical actions and results. But they have nowhere to escape from this submarine, and system's broken clay legs are just a matter of near future. I have become an activist: for me, this is the foundation on which my world can survive and the old system that I find disgusting can be overcome. Now, I am building a pan-Ukrainian educational movement to shape an informed, aware and critical civil society. Until I feel that society has grown up and assumed responsibility for its future, I will be doing just that.

Pavlo Podobed,
manager of Heroika, a charity fund



1. My key expectation of the Maidan was to prevent the ruling regime from turning my country into a GULAG. In this, I am not disenchanted. The Maidan was a point of no return in our history.

2. As to reforms and profound changes in the country: If you want to develop some useful skills, go to the gym, go to bed and get up early, or simply quit smoking – just recall how much of a challenge that is. 75% of beginners quit working out after the first month, and the rest – in six months. Only a handful of the most determined ones go on for years. A mere will to sculpt one's body into perfection is not enough – determination is key as well. Transforming the state takes the same principles. Our reformers currently lack both the will, and determination.

No neighbour can help you in the gym or at a boxing ring. He can give you a tool or advice, but not more. Nobody will go on the ring for you.

3. I and a group of likeminded people are working in Heroika, a charity foundation. We are helping those who are fighting in the front, as well as those who return. I am ready to work in state institutions and assume responsibility for specific tasks. For how long? Long enough provided that the state quits its current imitations. ■

Born Free

Author:
Yuriy Makarov



Perhaps it is because of my age, but I find myself comparing our present daily life in great detail with what I remember from my past every day, every hour. And most impressive is not the clearly obvious things like the range of products the local supermarket offers compared to the stores of my youth, the ability to read and watch whatever I want without being persecuted, or the absence of the party committee before which even I (a deeply nonpartisan person) was regulated in all matters ranging from my political loyalty to my right to divorce and all kinds of “unauthorized” connections... Instead, I react to tiny details. The day before yesterday, I watched a girl walk by - pretty, in orange jeans, with a goofy hat and a backpack, and... she was smiling to herself! I don't even mention the fact that forty years ago, jeans and backpacks were mainly only accessible to black marketeers and the children of the Party elite. But that a person would just walk along the street smiling to oneself? In the USSR that I remember, if someone was smiling - not in her home, not in a parade, not at the movies or the circus, but for no apparent reason, you'd think she was crazy.

Another observation: while living in the usual hustle and bustle of Kyiv, I shamelessly eavesdrop on peoples' conversations on the street, at the cashier queue, at the bus stop, or in the park. It's the flaw of a professional journalist who aspires to be a novelist. Of

course, I'm not making careful calculations, but I recently realized that nearly half of the passers-by are speaking Ukrainian.

For the most part, these are people under 40 who do not look like visitors. This was a revelation for me because I had become accustomed to living in a Russian-speaking city. What does this mean? The same Kyiv residents 30-40 years ago inevitably switched into Russian for reasons of security or convenience. Ukrainian is now the official language, but do they feel like they in an oppressive environment? No, people are simply behaving like free citizens.

I recently spoke with several higher-than-average government officials. Quite predictably, they were all in their 30s, had received MBAs or Fulbright stipends, had their own projects in Amsterdam or multi-million dollar companies. For me, they not only differed from the usual bureaucrat in terms of their dress, vocabulary, and mannerisms, but I even had the sense that they came from entirely different stock. And they were ambitious, but that is no surprise.

**A NEW GENERATION
HAS FORMED THAT DOES
NOT REMEMBER THE USSR
NOR UNDERSTAND WHAT IT
MEANT TO BE A SLAVE TO IT**

Foreign journalists often ask how the Maidan differed from the Orange Revolution. For me, it is obvious that the physical composition has changed. People who were 10-15 years old in 2004 have pushed to the forefront. What began the active phase of the EuroMaidan? We all know it was the beating of the students (by police). Who first mentioned the bottle as a weapon of the proletariat? The youth. Who died on Instytutska St.? Look at the lists: it was mostly young people. Who are the volunteers fighting on the Donbas front? I remember the faces of the guys in the Azov Battalion: they look like focused and mature, like adults, but they can't hide their young age. It's obvious that a new generation has formed that does not remember the USSR nor understand what it meant to be a slave to it.

There is no sense in idealizing: among the remnants and prejudices of the past that have been rejected by the younger generation, we find not only rejection of mental dependence on the authorities, the “collective”, and the special services. Along with this dependence the youth has left behind some patriarchal ideas about decency and propriety, which were

largely naive and hypocritical (or at least compromising), but they were there. After all, not everyone is able to independently perform the necessary internal moral work to determine their own individual scale of what is good and what is bad -

some need an established framework for that. Without that readymade, widely accepted and primitive matrix, temptations to switch from good to bad are often insurmountable. Without that matrix, culprits emerge easily. Yet, it is still better than yesterday's crowds of psychologically traumatized, obedient robots (the robot with insecurities was a special achievement of Soviet social engineering).

The Revolution of Dignity gave us, among other things, hope for a reshuffling of the elite, including in terms of age—but this hope was barely realized. Not least because “generation next” still lacks a sense of itself as a separate and individual social force. And without this sense the potential for social transformation that is inherent in the current Ukrainian youth will hardly be used for change. For it to be involved, the slogan “Give way to the young!” should first be articulated and determined by those currently on top. Otherwise, the power that lies dormant within the new generation of Ukrainians will dissolve into skepticism, or worse... emigration. ■



The Many Faces of Tradition

Ukrainians have developed tolerance for other religions and a democratic attitude to religious institutions thanks to the many religious traditions that historically existed in the land

Various forms of Christianity, paganism, Judaism, and Islam coexisted in the territory of the modern Ukraine since ancient times. In later periods and in modern times, a number of other beliefs were added to the list. This created a unique environment where different religions coexisted peacefully in the same area, while tolerance became an inherent feature of the Ukrainian national character. Besides, Ukraine never had religious wars. Another national Ukrainian tradition is horizontal interaction between society and the church: it ensured twoway influence of the church on the laity and vice versa. This distinguishes Ukraine from the vertical traditions that existed in Rome, Constantinople, and later in Moscow.

The Symphony of Church and State, adapted from the Byzantine Empire and still viable in Russia that likes to boast of its "Third Rome" status, the secularism and atheism of the Soviet period, and the European trends of post-secularism when religion gradually stepped down from the public and political arena, becoming a private matter – all these models of interaction between the society and religious organizations either existed traditionally or are present in today's Ukraine in one form or another, accounting for that specific Ukrainian attitude toward religion and the Church as an institution that is markedly noticeable to this day.

SYMPHONY AND THE RULE OF ELECTION

The system of church-state relations of Kyivan Rus developed upon the final introduction of Christianity was brought from the Byzantine Empire, along with its religious tradition. It was the practice of the "Symphony of Church and State" prescribed in the sixth paragraph of the Code of Emperor Justinian, whereby the State and the Church

Author:
Hanna Trehub

were declared to be the two divine gifts to humanity that should exist in perfect harmony with each other. While the Church takes care of the works of God, the State is responsible for the worldly matters and, at the same time, for the protection of the Church dogma and the priesthood that ensures the compliance of public life with religious prescriptions. In the times of Yaroslav the Wise, the institutions and structures necessary for the activities of the local church were formed, and a Metropolitan arch-see was established at the St. Sofia Cathedral in Kyiv. In 1051, Metropolitan Hilarion, a local, was elected to head the Kyiv archdiocese, becoming the first church leader of the Kyivan Rus. At first, bishops were elected by the Bishops' Council, but later a tradi-

equal and equivalent, meant in practice the predominance of only one of them over the political and social life. This gave rise to the "Papa-Caesarism" phenomenon, when the church clergy assumed the power of political governance, or to "Caesaropapism," when the church was subordinated to secular rulers and served their interests. Depending on the prevailing trend, the Church had the status of either the ruling or a subordinate institution. In the Ukrainian territory that was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the above practices coexisted at the turn of the Middle Ages and the early modern period (though their forms differed from those of Western Europe and Muscovy). A distinctive feature was the "right of patronage," when possession of churches and monasteries was granted to the clergy by the king, magnates or noblemen who concentrated in their hands the ownership of the Church property and its lands. This allowed them to impose their will or denominational preferences, and even to sell the highest clerical posts. At the Vilnius Church Council of 1509, convened at the initiative of the Kyiv Metropolitan Joseph Soltan, a rule was adopted that condemned the Symphony and the use of the right of patronage for the appointment and ordination of clergy, and those ordained for money were excommunicated.

At about the same time, the tradition of the Kyivan Orthodox Metropolia returned to election of the clergy for offices within the church. Eparches were elected by councils, where laymen also had voting rights. Priests and deacons were elected at the meetings of parishioners. Special agreements were made, often in writing, stipulating the terms of holding specific clerical posts. In the 18th century, a parish "choice" was used, which was a special deed confirming the community's agreement to accept a person as

THE COEXISTENCE OF MANY RELIGIONS IN UKRAINE IS A HISTORICAL PHENOMENON, NOT SOMETHING OF THE LAST 25 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

tion was established whereby local princes and other local authorities determined the nominees for ordination. The tradition of moving eparches from one see to another did not exist in the medieval Kyivan Metropolia. At the same time, every town had its own bishop or metropolitan, which made the status of the head of a diocese higher than that in Byzantium. Bishops were assisted by the clergy acting on the basis of customary law. These were the priests with the highest available levels of education and the monks headed by an Archpriest. They assisted the bishop during various religious ceremonies, sat in judgment, and managed the property of the diocese.

The Symphony of Church and State, while proclaiming the two parties to this relationship to be

a member of the clergy. The electivity extended to monasteries, where archimandrites and abbots were elected. Such practice was characteristic, in particular, of Kyiv monasteries, where both secular clergy and laypeople took part in the elections of their heads. The participation of laypeople in the elections of church clergy goes back to the apostolic times, when the Apostles along with the lay people elected two candidates and cast lots between them. The electivity of the clergy at all levels was carefully preserved by the Kyiv Metropolia and distinguished it from the Moscow and even the Constantinople Churches, where bishops and priests are appointed to this day. In the 6th century Byzantium, the Justinian Code was enacted, whereby 2 or 3 bishop nominees were elected by higher clergy and influential local officials, but the final choice was left to the Metropolitan or the Patriarch. This system was borrowed in its entirety by Muscovy, but when absolute monarchy was established there, it lost any signs of electivity. From the mid-15th century, bishops and even the Metropolitan in Muscovy were elected "with the help of the Holy Spirit and at the command of our lord the Grand Duke...." The 17th century Order and Rule code stated that bishops were those "whom the Czar commanded, and His Holiness Patriarch blessed." Priests were appointed by the acting hierarch.

In case of elections with free votes, the candidate elected by many was not obliged to anyone in particular. Over time, this ensured the establishment of the principles of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's hierarchical structure that were radically different from the ones used in churches subordinated to Constantinople or Moscow. Bishops who elected the Metropolitan considered themselves to be equal to him, and the Metropolitan to be the first among equals. Therefore, the clergy had both rights and obligations not only to secular authorities, but also to the community. This also influenced the establishment of Orthodox Church Fellowships in Ukraine that largely influenced the country's spiritual and secular life.

FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

The territory of the modern-day Ukraine is interesting by the fact that the existence and the coexis-

ST. HYACINTH
A Catholic
presbyter
who founded
a Dominican
monastery in
Kyiv in 1228.
Only the Tatar
invasion made
him leave the
capital of Rus



tence of many religions in this land, their contacts and conflicts are a historical phenomenon and not a new feature of the last 25 years of its independence. If we try to understand the history of the spread of Christianity in this geographical area, we will discover that it is not just the canonical story of the Conversion of Rus by Prince Volodymyr in 988, with Byzantium as the only source of Christianization. Geographically important in spreading Christianity were the cities of the Black Sea coast and Crimea, where Christianity was adopted already in the first centuries AD, in the times of the Roman Empire, and the areas along the Dnipro, which had close contacts with the Black Sea coast and the Steppe. These areas were under the influence of the Scythian, Korsun, Gothic, Surozh, Fulla and Bosphorus dioceses that spread

Christianity not only among the tribes living in the Ukrainian steppes, such as the Goths and the remains of the Scythians and Sarmatians, but also among the Slavs living in the North, up the Dnipro. If we consider the Christianization of Rus as a separate state, the story is similar to the conversion of its nearest neighbors, Scandinavians. Worth remembering here is the hypothesis of the first official Conversion of Rus by Askold the Varangian, who, most probably, was baptized by the missionaries of the Roman rather than Byzantine rite. The new belief lost the functions of a state religion after the coup of 882. During the 10th century, Christianity struggled with paganism, and outbreaks of anti-Christian violence were followed by periods of religious tolerance. Rus had contacts with Christian centers both in Constantinople and in



ICON OF ST. BARBARA THE GREAT MARTYR. Early 19th century, Transcarpathia. Likeness to local life is characteristic of modern Ukrainian iconography

tantism in the forms of Lutheranism, Calvinism and Socinianism started spreading in Ukraine just a few decades after its emergence in Europe in the mid-16th century. In the early 19th century, the second wave of Protestantism arrived in Ukraine, when various forms of Evangelical Christianity spread along its territory. In the late 16th century, Greek Catholic Church was established, a phenomenon that is no less unique and distinctive to Ukraine than Anglicanism is to Great Britain. After the accession of Ukraine to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Roman Catholicism felt quite confident in its territory. Old Believers and Molokans fled here from the repressions of the Russian tsarist government. This is just a base map that does not cover all the religious beliefs that in the past and during the modern period chose Ukraine as their motherland on Earth, and the Ukrainians as their flock.

Despite all the positive points mentioned above, problems related to religious life in Ukraine remain. They include both the fact that the numerous churches and religious organizations actively working and feeling fine in Ukraine sometimes fail to perceive themselves as Ukrainian ones, and the lack of understanding by Ukrainians what religions exist in their country and how traditional they are to this land. Any revolution, including the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity, affects the entire soci-

KYIV METROPOLIA CAREFULLY PRESERVED ELECTIONS OF THE CLERGY.

THIS DIFFERED IT FROM THE MOSCOW AND EVEN THE CONSTANTINOPLE CHURCHES

Rome, which sent missionaries to Kyivan Rus under Popes Benedict VII, John XV, and Sylvester II. There is a record that the first Latin diocese in Kyiv was founded in 977 by Archbishop Boniface. The tradition of the de facto Christian-Pagan dual faith existed for a long time, took deep roots in Ukrainian folklore, and was nowadays complemented by Neopaganism as an attempt to restore the pre-Christian spiritual tradition.

The Jewish tradition has also long been known in Ukraine. Its adepts lived in the cities along the Black Sea coast and later in different cities of Rus. Besides, Judaism was the dominant religion of the Khazar Khaganate, which, until the times of Prince Svyatoslav, collected tribute from the lands that later became part of Kyivan Rus. In the first half of the 18th century, in the territory of Western Ukraine,

the mystical branch of Judaism, Hasidism, emerged as an alternative to the dogmatic, ritual formalism of the rabbinical orthodoxy. The founder of Hasidism was Israel ben Eliezer (Baal Shem Tov), known among both Jewish and non-Jewish population of Podillya as a holy man and a miracle-worker. By the middle of the 19th century, half of the Jewish communities of Ukraine confessed Hasidism. Islam has been known in the territory of modern-day Ukraine since the Kyiv Rus times. It established itself on the Ukrainian territory back in the 13th century, with the arrival of its adepts, Crimean Tatars and the Nogai, Yedisán and Bucak Hordes, with whom the ancestors of today's Ukrainians had not only military conflicts, but also close trade relations ([read more about Islamism in Crimea on p. 38](#)). Protes-

ety, including religious organizations. It is obvious that given the current military aggression of Russia, Ukrainians, despite their natural tolerance, will not tolerate either pro-Moscow or pacifist slogans adopted by religious centers and their leaders. For the latter, it is now time to finally decide which side to take, and for Ukrainians, to learn more about themselves and their fellow citizens. ■

Freedom of Belief No More

With the war and occupation by Russia-backed separatists, believers in Eastern Ukraine faced brutal intolerance, repression and murder

Separatists came to Donbas armed with the ideology of "Russkiy Mir", the Russian World, in its most aggressive version that was enshrined in the "Constitution of the Donetsk People's Republic" adopted on May 14, 2014. Its preamble states that the "Supreme Council" adopts the "Constitution" "confessing the Orthodox faith (the Holy Greek Orthodox Christian faith of the Eastern Rite) of the Russian Orthodox Church (of the Moscow Patriarchate) and acknowledging it to be the keystone of the "Russian World." By doing so, the separatists, under the guise of Orthodoxy, introduced a special doctrine providing the foundation for the Russian World and opposed not only to the Christian religion as such, but also to all other Orthodox Churches. The ninth chapter of the "DPR Constitution" declares this creed to have a commanding status: "In Donetsk People's Republic, the leading and dominant faith is the Orthodox faith (the Holy Greek Orthodox Christian faith of the Eastern Rite) as professed by the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate). The historical importance and the role of Orthodoxy and the Russian Orthodox Church (of the Moscow Patriarchate) are acknowledged and respected, primarily, as systemically important pillars of the Russian World."

This provision also puts the separatists into the opposition to most believers of Donbas, where diversity has always been a typical feature. The number of local Protestant communities registered there before the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war was just a little below the number of parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate. In these circumstances, a religious conflict was inevitable.

The Donetsk Regional State Administration reported that as of the end of 2014, 1,795 religious organizations, including 1,723 reli-

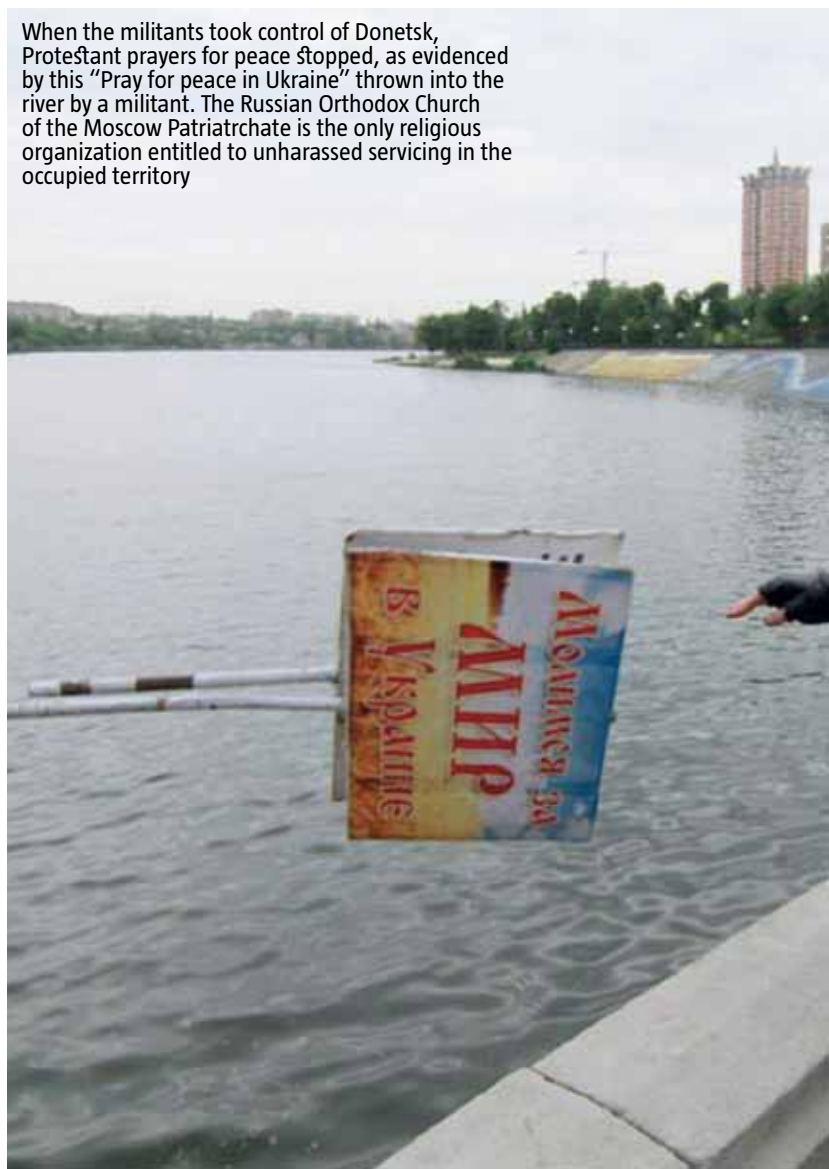
Автор:
Николай
Карпitskiy

BIO
Николай Карпitskiy is a Russian religious Studies scholar, former Professor at the Philosophy Department of Siberian State Medical Institute (Tomsk). Persecution from Russian law enforcement authorities for human rights advocacy forced Dr. Karpitskiy to move to Ukraine more than a year ago

gious communities, were registered in Donetsk Oblast (including the occupied territories). Orthodox religious organizations accounted for about 49% of those (42.9% of them being religious organizations of the Moscow Patriarchate). Protestants of all denominations had over 700 organizations, or 40.9% of the total

number, including charismatic churches accounting for more than 12%, and Baptists having more than 10%. The rest were 38 Muslim, 19 Jewish, 14 Buddhist and 8 Vaishnav religious organizations registered in the oblast. In addition to that, the locals practiced domestic churches and communities with no official registra-

When the militants took control of Donetsk, Protestant prayers for peace stopped, as evidenced by this "Pray for peace in Ukraine" thrown into the river by a militant. The Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is the only religious organization entitled to unharassed servicing in the occupied territory



tion, as the Ukrainian law permits this. Some churches in the occupied territories had to close down because of the violence on the part of the separatists. The Donetsk Oblast State Administration (currently based in the Ukraine-controlled Mariupol) also reported that 26 religious missions were officially registered in Donetsk Oblast. All of them represented Protestant denominations (Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Full Gospel Church, Church of Christ, Church of God Pentecostal, Association of Independent ECB Churches and Association of Missionary Churches of Evangelical Christians of Ukraine). The following missions were very actively engaged in evangelization and charitable activities: Ark (ECB,

Makyivka), Path to Heart (ECB, Khartsyzsk), Ark (CEF, Slovyansk), Opportunity (CEF, Mariupol), God's Assembly in Ukraine (CEF, Donetsk), Share thy Bread with the Hungry (Full Gospel

IN THE SEPARATISTS' WORLDVIEW, PROTESTANTS, CATHOLICS AND ORTHODOX OTHER THAN THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE ARE ENEMIES OF THE RUSSIAN WORLD

Church, Makyivka), City of Refuge (CEF, Donetsk), and Blue Cross (ECB, Makyivka).

The war in Eastern Ukraine was preceded by a massive pro-Russian propaganda campaign but people with firm beliefs were more resistant to it than others. That is why at the beginning of the war, most Protestants of Donbas were morally on the side of Ukraine. With the Orthodox, the situation is more complicated, since many believers consider themselves to be Orthodox not on religious, but on ideological grounds. In fact, all those who had some value navigators, whether Protestants, Orthodox, Vaishnav or Muslim, seemed to be immune to propaganda and, therefore, were perceived by the adherents of the "Russian World" as potential enemies.

Many residents of Donbas met the victory of the Maidan with suspicion, even though their attitudes varied. Many did not like the corrupt Yanukovich government, but still prayed for it. Students being beaten up and later people shot down on Maidan, as well as Viktor Yanukovich fleeing – all those events raised certain questions: to what extent the authorities can be considered legitimate, for how long it is necessary to pray for them, and how the new government should be perceived? Some of the bishops had their own standpoint, and others did not, but since neither priesthood nor episcopate had a clear understanding of the situation, it was deemed necessary to refrain from stating any political positions. However, the outbreak of the war urged many to self-determination, expressing their position not only in word, but also in deed and helping residents of the

combat zone in need of assistance, as well as the Ukrainian military.

In different cities of Donbas, after the outbreak of the war, the events followed one and the same scenario. First, rumors that the Right Sector is coming; later, seizure of administrative buildings, with police being absolutely inert; then, mobilization of lumpenprols who considered themselves to be the masters of the streets; then, the arrival of mercenaries with military skills who forced out the lumpen; and finally, the emergence of heavy weapons and unidentified military professionals. In these circumstances, even those pastors who previously had not supported Maidan turned into the supporters of Ukraine. Gradually, the mood of the population began to change, and today most Donbas residents in the liberated territories remember the occupation period only as a nightmare.

Oleksiy Palchenko, the Deacon of a small Love of Jesus Pentecostal church located on the outskirts of Kramatorsk in Donetsk Oblast, said that only one Protestant church out of twenty active in the city supported separatists. He himself, during the occupation, would drive to Ukrainian checkpoints the assistance gathered by the parishioners of his church – elderly pensioners, who helped the Ukrainian military from their miserable pensions, cooked, and made sauerkraut.

There were no arrests of Christians in Kramatorsk, but some pastors were warned that they were on the arrest list and therefore had to leave the city. In Slovyansk, however, the arrests of ministers and active parishioners of Protestant churches began very soon.

On May 16, 2014, at the order of the city's military authorities, the Bishop of the Ukrainian Church of God Evangelical association and the senior pastor of the Good News Pentecostal church in Slovyansk Oleksiy Demydovych was arrested by the separatists. Before that, separatists came after his brother, pastor Serhiy Demydovych, and searched his home and garage for something, saying that he "worked for Americans." Fortunately, Serhiy Demydovych at that time was in Kyiv and escaped the arrest, but Oleksiy spent seven hours in the basement, blindfolded. After that, the separatist-appointed mayor of



Slovyansk Vyacheslav Ponomarev came and ordered to release Oleksiy Demydovych. A former drug addict, Ponomarev underwent a rehabilitation course at one of the Protestant churches and in this way became familiar with Protestant activities. Pastors took the first arrest for a warning, and quickly left the occupied city. Members of the "militia" who sympathized with them later confessed to parishioners: "Had the pastors not left then, they would have never been able to do so."

The separatists made no bones of the "dissenters": all Orthodox priests not belonging to the Moscow Patriarchate were expelled from the city right away (which probably saved their lives), but the question of what to do with the Protestants did not have a general solution. Natalya Bradarska, widow of the Deacon of the Transfiguration Pentecostal Evangelical church who was gunned down told how the militants came to them. They liked the grand church building with columns located in the town center. "Americans? A pro-American church?" the separatists asked. They could not believe that the building of the former House of Culture was fully restored by parishioners with just donations: "You get help from Americans, Americans are our enemies, and we are the Russian Orthodox Army." First, the militants hesitated whether to seize the building or not, but then they said: "Keep praying for now." And they seized another church, Good News, which was located on a hill and therefore was more valuable from the military point of view. The pastor of the Good News church Petro Dudnyk told that the separatists chased everyone out of the church, saying that the barracks would be located there. After the separatists fled, Ukrainian military had to use three trucks to take away all the weapons they left in the church building.

The scale of repressions is difficult to assess so far, since fragmented information comes from various sources and still needs to be summarized. The press center of the civic movement Vsi razom! (All Together) in March 2015 published the results of the monitoring of persecution on religious grounds in the occupied territories of Donbas: "The facts of murders

of seven members of the clergy have been established reliably. More than 40 church ministers have been in captivity, with interrogations and beatings. Also in 2014, militants seized buildings and premises of 12 Christian communities, a church orphanage, a Christian university, and the premises of three rehabilitation centers for alcohol and drug abusers. Besides, shelling damaged five church buildings, three of which were burnt down." It is safe to say that the repressions had a much larger scale than these data show. In particular, despite the fact that the separatists treated the Baptists rather tolerantly, according to the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, as of September 2014, seven of their churches were seized and three more were destroyed. The relatively "tolerant" attitude towards the Baptists was manifest in the fact that in the city of Antratsyt, the separatists seized the building of the House of Prayer for all Nations Baptist Church twice, later giving it back.

Pastor Serhiy Kosyak provided information on the seizure of church buildings. In May 2014, the separatists seized church buildings in Horlivka and Snizhne and the Evening Light rehabilitation center in Donetsk, taking captive 29 people, some of whom were beaten. In June 2014, they seized churches in Torez, Shakhtarsk and Druzhkivka, two churches in Horlivka, the Rock of Salvation rehabilitation center and the entire premises of Donetsk Christian University in Donetsk. In August 2014, they seized church buildings in Donetsk, Olenivka and Horlivka, and in September 2014, in Donetsk and Rovenky. The seizure of churches was very often accompanied by the arrests of pastors.

While Protestant churches were seized selectively, those of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church were taken consistently and systematically. Administrator of the Donetsk Diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, Archbishop Serhiy (Horobtsov) in February 2015 said that 30 out of the 40 parishes of the Kyiv Patriarchate in the occupied territory ceased their activities, and most of the clergy had to emigrate because of the threats of



Separatists have realized that charity and help from Protestants decreases social tension

the separatists, while those who remained had to go underground.

The overall picture of the persecution of Christians in the occupied territories is not uniform. Arrests were carried out systematically in the cities where the respective structures were created: in Slovyansk, Donetsk, and Horlivka. In other places, such as Kramatorsk, such structures were established, but never started working. In some provincial towns, separatists did not interfere in the life of the citizens, while elsewhere, autonomous groups of Russian mercenaries and units of Russian Cossacks terrorized the population.

Slovyansk suffered the most of the repressions. On June 8, 2014, the Trinity Sunday, the separatists abducted four Christians: Viktor Bradarsky (40 y.o., 3 children), two sons of pastor Pavenko, Ruvim (29 y.o., married) and Albert (24 y.o., married), and Volodymyr Velychko (8 children, 41 y.o.). They were taken after the service, when people were leaving the Transfiguration church. In 16 hours, they were shot down, but the murder was concealed from the relatives.



While Slovyansk was controlled by just one separatist group, in Donetsk there were many of them, which made repressions even more unpredictable. On February 25, 2014, in downtown Donetsk, a prayer marathon "for peace, love and unity of Ukraine" was launched for representatives of all religious groups. On May 24, 2014, the militants raided the prayer tent, threatening to shoot down anyone coming to pray. Marathon participant Serhiy Kosyak, pastor of the Assembly of God Evangelical Church of Donetsk, went to the separatists' headquarters to discuss the incident, where he was arrested. After eight hours of tortures, a commander came and started yelling at his subordinates, demanding that they ask for forgiveness and return all belongings. He then came up to Pastor Serhiy and said that he went to the New Generation rehabilitation center, but then departed from God and that by saving him he hoped to get some grace in Lord. From this episode, it is clear that the attitude of the separatists to the marathon was hostile, but there were many locals

among the militants, who knew the worshipers personally, and this somehow held them off. Nevertheless, continued attacks and arrests of the worshipers, and then in August, already under Igor Strelkov, a series of arrests and the direct ban on church assemblies forced them to go underground.

Besides the centralized separatist structure in Donetsk, there are also other autonomous groups, in which there are no sympathizers for the churchgoers. One of such extremist groups, the Russian Orthodox Army, took captive Father Tykhon Kulbaka, a Greek Catholic priest, on July 4, 2014. Father Tykhon, a diabetic, spent 12 days in captivity without medicines. He survived by a miracle. Three times they took him out for execution, each time shooting over his head. Roman Catholic priests were also arrested. On May 27, 2014, priest Pavlo Vityok was arrested, spending a day in captivity. On July 15, Viktor Vonsovykh was arrested, spending ten days in captivity.

In the first months of the occupation, Donetsk pastors tried to find some kind of a compromise with local militants, many of whom they knew personally. In July 2014, mercenaries started arriving to the city, and the situation worsened for the Christians. With the arrival of Igor Strelkov (Girkin), the arrests of the Christians in Donetsk grew more frequent. In August 2014, reprisals reached the peak, and subdued thereafter.

Further decrease of the level of persecution was due to several factors. Primarily, the separatists solved their property issues, hav-

not affected. Thirdly, the separatists gradually became used to Protestants and started developing some general principles of administering the territories. Fourthly, the separatists saw that the Protestants' assistance to the needy reduces the level of social tension created by the lack of financing and ruined social infrastructure.

For this very reason, the militants are unusually tolerant of the Vaishnavs, who feed the hungry in the occupied territories as part of their Food for Life program. Nevertheless, the Vaishnavs experienced reprisals along with other denominations: some of the followers of this faith were arrested, and all public Vaishnav activities were banned. However, they chose not to focus attention on these facts, believing their main priority today to be the charitable distribution of food.

The repressions, in any case, never ceased, only becoming more systematic and pragmatic. Instead of the seizure of church property, the separatist authorities chose the strategy of forced cooperation, the first step being the requirement to register churches. However, this process is still at an early stage, and there have been yet no direct reprisals for the refusal to register. Nevertheless, moral pressure increases.

Within religious communities and even church councils, groups of people emerged who support the separatists and insist on cooperation with the separatist authorities. For pastors and parishioners, it is dangerous to show their pro-Ukrainian stand even inside the church, since they may be reported to the "Ministry of State Security" carrying out political reprisals against dissenters.

All these arrests were made on ideological grounds, since in the separatists' worldview, Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox (other than the Moscow Patriarchate) are enemies of the "Russian World." Separatist groups were numerous, and the reprisals took the form of chaotic bandit attacks. With time, the ideological basis was replaced with the pragmatic one, aimed at retaining power. Therefore, the repression of religious organizations in Donbas will not stop. It will only change the form with a view to strengthening the overall control. ■

INSTEAD OF THE SEIZURE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, THE SEPARATIST AUTHORITIES ARE NOW CHOOSING THE STRATEGY OF FORCED COOPERATION

ing seized everything they wanted. There were even several cases when buildings were restituted to church communities. Secondly, pastors and priests who irritated the separatists were forced to leave the occupied territory. The activities of the Orthodox churches of the Moscow Patriarchate were

Giray's Faith

The roots of moderate Islam of the Crimean Tatars are buried in the history of this people

Author:
Hanna Trehub

The legend has it that Islam proliferated in Crimea owing to two associates of Prophet Muhammad Malik al-Ashtar and Ghazi Mansour as early as the 7th century A.D. Yet it is more likely that the peninsula turned Muslim owing to Turks rather than Arabs. It came as a result of a conquest in the 13th century. In 1222 Sudak and Solkhat (now Saryi Krym or Old Crimea) were temporarily held by the Seljuks under the leadership of Amir Husain-ad-din Choban, the military chief of the famous Seljuk sultan Alaeddin Keykubad I. After one year they were displaced by the Mongols led by Genghis Khan's eldest son Jochi. They ruled Crimea for the two following centuries. The first Golden Horde leader to adopt Islam was Berke Khan, Batu's brother. This ruler did not carry out forced islamisation of the population, which at the time included Tengriists, Christians

and Judaists among others. At the same time khan's documents contain mentions of "Sheiks and Sufis" next to officials and ruling classes of the khanate. The oldest mosque on the peninsula was built in 1262 in Solkhat by a Bukhara native. But oldest remaining ruins are of the mosque complex commissioned directly by the Mamluk Sultan Baibars in 1288. After 1475 when the Ottoman Turks captured Caffa the Crimean peninsula fell under the influence of the Turkish Islam with all of its implications. That is when the Hanafi Sunni Islam (one of the four main Islamic schools of jurisprudence) was proclaimed the official religion of the Crimean Khanate, while the Turkish Padishah became the caliph of all Sunnis. This period saw the formation of the unique Turkic-Muslim culture, which had a considerable influence on Crimea and the adjacent territories up until 1917.

Zyndzhyrly medrese, the best-known Muslim historic university in Crimea



The Mongol and Ottoman empires, as well as the Crimean Khanate within them appear to be rather diverse countries in terms of ethnicity and religion, countries, the rulers of which were devoid of religious fanaticism. Even proclaiming Sunni Islam as the official religion of the state they did not carry out sweeping systemic Islamisation of the followers of other religions populating the land, they realized that religious conflicts would only weaken the state. It's worth noting that in the case of the Crimean Khanate the process of adopting Islam was not completed until the 18th century. 'In the context of converting the story of the Crimean Greek population, which was deported by Catherine II to what is currently the south of Donetsk region, is very telling. Among them were the Turkic Urums, whose language is in many ways closer to the Crimean Tatar one, rather than other Turkic languages. In order to avoid deportation entire villages converted to Islam. Turkic-speaking Muslim equaled Crimean Tatar, and the latter weren't subject to deportation. So entire villages on the South Coast of Crimea, which had been Christian for centuries became Muslim. Many of the current residents in those parts believe they are Crimean Tatars, although in reality they have Greek roots', says the Crimean Tatar independent journalist Dilaver Saidakhmetov. Seiran Afirov, who used to be mufti of a Simferopol



mosque before Crimea's annexation adds: 'In the Ottoman Empire those, who converted from Islam to other religions were punished only if they partook in military campaigns against Porte. In such a case they were accused not of apostasy, but of treason. In all other cases there were attempts to persuade such persons to turn back to Islam in a peaceful manner.'

CRIMEA OF MADRASSAS AND SUFIS

The Crimean peninsula had always been not on the outskirts of the Muslim world, but rather one of its cultural and education centers, at the crossroads of the pathways from countries in the Middle East and Central Asia, of Turkey and Persia, which allowed acquiring and accumulating knowledge, and having own input both in theology and law, as well as in science. Unfortunately, not many in today's Ukraine know about this. Orientalist Mykhaylo Yakubovych notes: "The Crimean Khanate is the territory from the Dnipro's rapids to Crimea, Azov and so forth. It has cultural likeness to Yedysan – the lands between the Dniester and the Bug, and Budjak – the lands between the Danube and the Dniester, which is the Northern Black Sea cultural region'. According to Yakubovych, among the world famous ulamas, judges, scientists, philosophers were the natives of this region, known as Caffavi (of

The mosque of Uzbek Khan, one of the oldest Golden Horde shrines in Crimea that has been preserved to our days. It dates back to the second half of the 13th century

Caffa), Qirimi or Karayimi, Akkermani etc. There were also names like al-Deshti (for example Ibrahim al-Meghmed al-Dashti Tatarsheikh), so those were the natives from what is currently the territory of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. The orientalist underscores that the residents of Crimea made a substantial contribution in the three main domains of the Muslim culture. "The matter of traditional Islamic Hanafi law has been developed by many authors, beginning with Sharafaddin al-Qirimi in the 15th century, and all the way to Addousadar al-Qirimi, the author of commentary to "Medjele" (the code of Ottoman law)", – the scholar continues. "The other element is kalam, the Islamic speculative theology. There was a whole cluster of Crimean authors, including Abu l'Baka al-Caffavi, the son of Caffa's mufti, who wrote "Kitab al-Kulliyat" ("Book of general notions"), an enormous work in Arabic containing 3,000 definitions. Their version of Denis Diderot, if you like. In the 18th century there were such authors as Mughammad al-Akkermani and Mughammad al-Caffavi. These two belong to Calizadeliph, the reformation movement in Islamic theology, which stood for modernization and the return to Sunna."

The Crimean Tatars' contribution to Sufism deserves a separate mention. Up until 1917 there were active spiritual centers representing four Sufi schools: Naqshbandi, Khalwati, Qadri and Mevlevi. The Naqshbandi and Khalwati representatives had the biggest presence and made the greatest intellectual contribution. "Out of the former it is worth mentioning Abd al-Baki Hi-

him al-Qirimi was a unique Khalwati thinker, the author of "Mawahib, ar-rahman fi-bayan maratib al-ikhwan" ("Gifts of the Merciful in Understanding of the Stages of Being") dedicated to the Ottoman sultan Mourad III, with a range of illustrations. One should also mention the representatives of the Qadri tariqate, particularly Selima Divane Qirimli, the 18th century Ottoman language author from Skopje, who wrote the well-known "Burhan-ul-Arfin we Nejatu al-Ghafilin" ("Guidance for the Knowing and Salvation of the Oblivious"). Who knows, perhaps it were these Sufis, who gave the present-day Crimean Tatars the tradition of honoring the aziz sites (important burial grounds of scientists, dervishes, military, who were made into saints by storytelling and the passing of time).

Crimea had its Islamic universities, the madrasas. Zincirli Madrasa is the famous one, but there were more. In 1332 with the support of Uzbek Khan emerged one of the first Muslim higher education schools of the peninsula – the Indji-bek Khatun Madrasa. Its first teachers were scientists from Persia and Central Asia. In the 15-16th centuries emerged the first generation of native Crimean Tatar scientists. They seek opportunities to move to other Muslim education centers overseas, in particular to Istanbul. According to Mykhaylo Yakubovych, this speaks not of their parochial nature, but on the contrary, of active cultural exchange, which deserves deeper research.

THE ROOTS OF MODERATION

Many wonder how come the Islam embraced by the Crimean Tatars – one of Ukraine's indigenous peoples – did not become radical in the present circumstances. There are a number of reasons. First and foremost it is the manifestation of the Turkic Islamic tradition described above. Another reason is that for more than two centuries Islam for the Crimean Tatars has been a private matter, not a social or political one. Ever since Crimea was annexed by the Russian Empire in 1784, Crimean Tatars were devoid of statehood and their religion no longer served as an instrument of politics. Therefore, as both mufti Seiran Afrov and the orientalist Mykhaylo Yakubovych describe it, all Islamic processes took

THE CRIMEAN PENINSULA HAD ALWAYS BEEN NOT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD, BUT RATHER ONE OF ITS CULTURAL AND EDUCATION CENTERS

jabi, the creator of "Risale Zubdet ul-Islam", written in Ottoman language; out of the former – the 15th century author Aghmad al-Qirimi, the proponent of ibn-Arabi views on equality of being, who substantiated a philosophical ontology" – Mykhaylo Yakubovych states. Ibra-



place in non-Islamic context. "The Volga and the Crimean Tatars are ethnicities who underwent modernization in non-Islamic environment. That is why the ideologies of political Islam that are characteristic of some Arabic states, aren't viewed as adequate by the Crimean Tatars. The Hanafi tradition got isolated within non-Islamic environment," – the scholar says. That is why the Crimean Islam is a European one, to a great extent a cultural one. The ideas of the ISIS and caliphate for this very reason are seen by them as something far-out.

According to Seiran Afirov, the formation of moderate Islam took place not without interference by the Soviet regime, as the representatives of this ethnic group got forcibly relocated to Central Asia. "In 1917 during the national liberation struggle, which was suppressed by the Bolsheviks, the Crimean Tatars lost the majority of their cultural elite, in which ulamas, imams and qadis (Muslim judges) played a significant role. Religious literature was destroyed, madrasas and mosques were closed. The number of people able to read religious literature written in old Crimean Tatar language using Arabic script was declining. As a consequence in a few decades Muslims in Crimea lost their respective knowledge and skills, while new religious books were in short supply. Basically, from 1917 to practically the late 1980s we had virtually no Islam at all. It was only preserved in the memory and

the practices followed by the regular people," states the imam.

The latter is something that every Crimean Tatar person can tell you all about recalling the customs of his family. Sunnet (circumcision), nikah (marriage), talaq (divorce) janazah (funeral), the ban on consuming pork... And that's about it. Nikah had been followed during the Soviet era rather as a tribute to tradition, as the anti-religion state policy has a significant impact. Extremely significant were the representatives of the clergy, who still remembered at least the basics of the Islamic teaching passing it them from one to another or from older relatives, who were also imams. Seiran Afirov recalls that in Central Asia the Crimean Tatars made an effort to stand out of the local community, which was also Turkic, in order to avoid assimilation. 'Most of the religious rites were conducted by Crimean mullahs. Only in times of large holidays like Sawm or Kurban Bayram (Eid al-Adha) the Crimean Tatars would join the local Muslims, where Uzbek or Kazakh imams headed the proceedings.' Generally Afirov describes the religious situation of the Crimean Tatars up until 1989 as something resembling complete vacuum imposed by the Soviet authorities, an information vacuum, which could be filled with fables and superstition. Someone had to counter this with adequate religious knowledge.

Ukraine's independence gave the Crimean Tatars the opportunity

Mausoleums (*dyurbe*) and graves of important Crimean Tatar figures, including rulers, scholars and clerics, turned with time into pilgrimage destinations (*azizin* Crimean Tatar). One is the Mausoleum of Dzhani-Khanym, the daughter of Tokhtamysh-Khan from Genghis-Khan dynasty, at Qirg-Yer (Chufut-Cale), a Golden Horde-epoch fortress



to return home and a chance to restore Islamic faith on the peninsula. The religious crisis, which span over 50 years had to be overcome somehow, to study religion all over again using different sources, of which there were several, particularly Turkic and Arabic. Already in the early 1990s the Muslims of Turkey established contact with Crimea's first mufti Seidjelil Ibrahimov and the Crimean muftiate. They opened a number of madrasas, sent literature and welcomed the graduates of Crimean madrasas for advanced studies (Crimean madrasas used to provide only a 1-2 year primary course). Owing to the Turks the Crimean Tatars received access to ilahiyat (Muslim faculties) in various Turkish universities. The Turkish influence included those who brought a variety of minute details of Turkish Islamic tradition to Crimea. As far as ideology is concerned, those belong to moderate Islam. There were, however, rather rigid Sufis, who were adamant that only their views were true. The followers of Fethullah Gülen, a branch of the Risale-i Nur Movement, presented another separate line.

The other source was Arabic. In 1990s students from Arabic countries began coming to Crimea in order to work with the locals. They toured the villages, conducted one- or two-week long courses, as well as Sunday classes to get the locals acquainted with Islam. While they were not Muslim scholars, each of them possessed religious knowledge far deeper than the majority of the Crimean Tatar mullahs could boast. In terms of interpretation of Islam, the Arabic world is not homogenous either. Some belong to moderate movements, some to Salafist, "Hizb ut-Tahrir", Al-Ahbash etc. As a result, Islam on the Crimean peninsula is in a way a

CRIMEAN ISLAM IS A EUROPEAN ONE, TO A GREAT EXTENT A CULTURAL ONE. FOR THIS REASON, THE IDEAS OF THE ISIS AND CALIPHATE ARE SEEN THERE AS SOMETHING FAR-OUT

projection of the modern Islamic world, where different movements balance each other out, not allowing any one of them to dominate. ■

Highlights and Margins of History

Almost 40 years ago, on August 1, 1975, the Helsinki Accords “Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States” were signed by 35 nations, a pivotal event that was to become the turning point in international relations, and a crucial political settlement in the Cold War era.

The Helsinki Final Act, or the Helsinki Declaration, included the following: Sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty; Refraining from the threat or use of force; Inviolability of frontiers; Territorial integrity of States; Peaceful settlement of disputes; Non-intervention in internal affairs; Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief; Equal rights and self-determination of peoples; Co-operation among States; Fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law.

The former Soviet Union was among those 35 nations that signed this political settlement. This has immediately paved the way for the human rights movement in the USSR. Like dissent and Soviet dissident movement that originated straight after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party dealing a blow to the myth of the unity and fanatical faith of the Soviet people in Stalin and Party, the human rights movement came to delegitimize the USSR.

Inside the empire, nobody or next to nobody believed in the right course or the bright future of that state; yet the signal had to be sent about its zero credibility and moral authority in terms of failure to honour its international and humanitarian obligations.

The Helsinki Accords were followed up by the Helsinki Watch, the first global NGO

in the area of human rights set in 1978 and led by the American human rights activist Aryeh Neier (it evolved into Human Rights Watch in 1988).

Even more importantly, a series of the Helsinki Groups were established in the USSR. Legendary Russian, Ukrainian, and Baltic human rights defenders and dissidents gained the momentum. The Soviet Union failed to react to this with self-restraint and dignity; instead, what followed next was numerous arrests, intimidation campaigns, interrogations, confinement of dissidents to psychiatric hospitals, ugly propaganda with toxic lies, defamation and slander campaigns, incarceration, and expulsion from the country.

Andrei Sakharov, Elena Bonner, Sergei Kovalev, Andrei Amalrik, Andrei Sinyavsky, Yuli Daniel, Lyudmila Alekseeva, Vladimir Bukovsky in Russia, or

Petro Hryhorenko and Semen Gluzman in Ukraine, or Aleksandras Shtromas and Tomas Venclova in Lithuania – they were all the offspring of the Helsinki Accords. They came to signify the arrival of the total and complete discredit of the regime, which pledged its alleged allegiances to human rights, civil liberties, and fundamental freedoms of its citizens. That was the exam, which turned impossible to pass for the Soviet regime.

What do we have now in Vladimir Putin’s Russia after 40 years? Let us take the so-called Decalogue of the Helsinki Declaration one more time, word by word: Sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty; Refraining from the threat or use of force; Inviolability of frontiers; Territorial integrity of States; Peaceful settlement of disputes; Non-intervention in internal affairs; Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief; Equal rights and self-determination of peoples; Co-operation among States; Fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law. Which of these is observed and respected? None. Even the USSR tried hard to do justice to at least some of these 10 points. Putin’s Russia tore this historic document to pieces.

HAVING VIOLATED THE PRINCIPLES OF INVIOABILITY OF FRONTIERS AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF STATES, RUSSIA BECAME BOUND TO EXPERIENCE ALL OF THEM ITSELF – SOONER OR LATER

with totally undermined reputation as a global player. Last but not least, it will take more than a decade or two to restore Europe’s good faith and trust in Russia which was extremely strong in Boris Yeltsin’s era and which is dead now.

So much for 40 years to the Helsinki Accords. Yet there is another anniversary that marks the birth of Europe the way we know it. It is 800 years to the Magna Carta – the first major legal document in England and in Europe that indicated and witnessed to emergence of the rule of law. Adopted on 15 June 1215, it still stands as a testimony to political wisdom, moderation, and the art of compromise.

Both the Magna Carta and the Helsinki Accords will get down in European history as its highlights. Yet Vladimir Putin and his regime, on the contrary, will be relegated to the margins of history. ■



Author:
Leonidas Donskis,
Lithuania

Little Steps to Great Freedom



Author:
Michael
Binyon,
UK

It is seen as the foundation of human rights, the original guarantee of the rule of law, the pillar of democracy that prevents a ruler ignoring the will of the people and places a curb on tyranny. Magna Carta – the Great Charter – was signed in a muddy field beside the River Thames 800 years ago, and since then has become the basis of not just English parliamentary democracy but of countless subsequent attempts to regulate human society and uphold human rights and dignity. It laid the foundations centuries later for the Enlightenment in the English-speaking world. It was a key influence in the founding of the United States and the writing of the new nation's constitution. And its provisions were embed-

ded in the charter that established the United Nations and in the subsequent Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In fact, Magna Carta did none of these things. It did not grant liberty to the people of England. It did not lay down a constitution. It did not say anything about universal human rights. Nor did it insist that a ruler had to be moral, righteous or honest in leading a nation. But over the centuries it has become a powerful symbol of freedom, democracy and human rights and it is now universally revered as the first and most crucial attempt in medieval Europe to establish the equal rights of all human beings under the rule of law.

That is why the anniversary of its signature has just been cele-

brated in Britain with great pomp and ceremony. That is why the Queen, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Prime Minister met again beside the river at Runnymede, not far from Windsor, on June 15 to pay tribute to Magna Carta and acknowledge its monumental contribution to the cause of liberty around the world. And that is why the Attorney General of the United States, representing the most powerful democracy in the world, joined them and spoke of the vital importance this document has played in defining the sort of society that America has become.

Today it is often noted that those countries that did not take any similar steps to limit the power of their rulers have never

enjoyed the same freedoms or commitment to democracy that England has known for a very long time. No limit was ever placed on the autocratic rule of the Russian tsars – which may explain why the country had Stalin. Over the centuries, no German prince was forced to abide by the will of the people – and so modern Germany saw the rise of Hitler.

Most people have forgotten the details of why Magna Carta was signed. All they know is that in 1215 King John, regarded as being one of the worst of the early English kings, was forced to sign a peace treaty with the powerful barons who had taken up arms against his tyrannical rule. They chose the marshy site by the river Thames because the land was so wet that neither the king nor the barons could bring an army there. The barons were angry that King John had thrown many of them into prison without trial and had tried to dominate the affairs of the Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of the Church in England, acted as an intermediary and drew up a peace treaty that promised the protection of church rights, protection for the barons from illegal imprisonment, access to swift justice, and limitations on feudal payments to the Crown. The provisions were to be implemented through a council of 25 barons. But in fact neither side stuck to their promises. And the document itself was soon annulled by Pope Innocent III.

But by chance Magna Carta had a second life. King John died a year later, and his son Henry III came to the throne as a weak boy controlled by a family group of regents. They needed to win power and support for the new king, and so reissued the document in 1216. At the same time they also issued a second document, called the Charter of the Forest, which did indeed promise rights and protection to ordinary people, and crucially allowed them access to the forests and lands where they lived. This second charter has been more or less forgotten, but it marked the first attempt to give some economic and human rights to ordinary villagers and labourers, most of whom were still serfs. But Magna

Carta was itself also reissued in 1225 in exchange for the King's right to levy new taxes. And from then on it was reissued by each succeeding new king and became part of England's statute law.

It is this point that is important – the rule of law. Justice was still fairly arbitrary in those days. Life for most ordinary people was nasty, brutish and short. But even in those days it became accepted that people could not be thrown into prison without a trial and that justice must be independent of the king. This provision was supplemented with the law, Habeas Corpus, which had been passed earlier but was then reaffirmed later, which challenged a court to produce for trial any person held in prison. This, plus Magna Carta, have formed the underlying principle of English common law, which is also the basis for the legal system in America and most other English-speaking countries.

The political myth of Magna Carta as the foundation of liberty in England grew over the centuries. It was repeatedly held up as a key provision of the law whenever there was a dispute between the monarch and parliament – and was an argument much used during the English civil war, which led to the execution of the king and the temporary transformation of England into a republic in the mid-1600s. Much of its actual content was in fact removed by parliament from the statute books by various new laws in the 18th and 19th centuries. But the principle remained supreme. The most senior English judge in recent times described it as "the greatest constitutional document of all times – the foundation of the freedom of the individual against the arbitrary authority of the despot".

The ceremonies marking the 800th anniversary were remarkable for several reasons. First, they brought together again the same three traditional pillars of British government – the monarchy, the church and the prime minister – that existed in the 13th century, although nowadays the prime minister represents the people instead of the barons, and the Church does not have the political or religious power that it had 800 years ago. Secondly, the attendance by

Loretta Lynch, the US attorney general, demonstrated the common constitutional commitment to liberty and the rule of law by both the British and US governments. And thirdly, for the first time there is now an official British memorial plaque and statue, unveiled by the Queen, on the site where the document was signed. Until recently the only memorial was one donated by the United States in 1957.

The charter was written in abbreviated Latin by quill pen on vellum sheets. Each bears a large royal seal in beeswax. Only four original copies of Magna Carta survive, one in the British Library and the other three in two English cathedrals.

Ironically, Britain is now engaged in a great debate about a proposal by the present Conservative government to withdraw from the European Convention of Human Rights – largely because of anger over the way this post-war treaty has often made it difficult for Britain to deport terrorists and has been seen as intrusive into Britain's legal system.

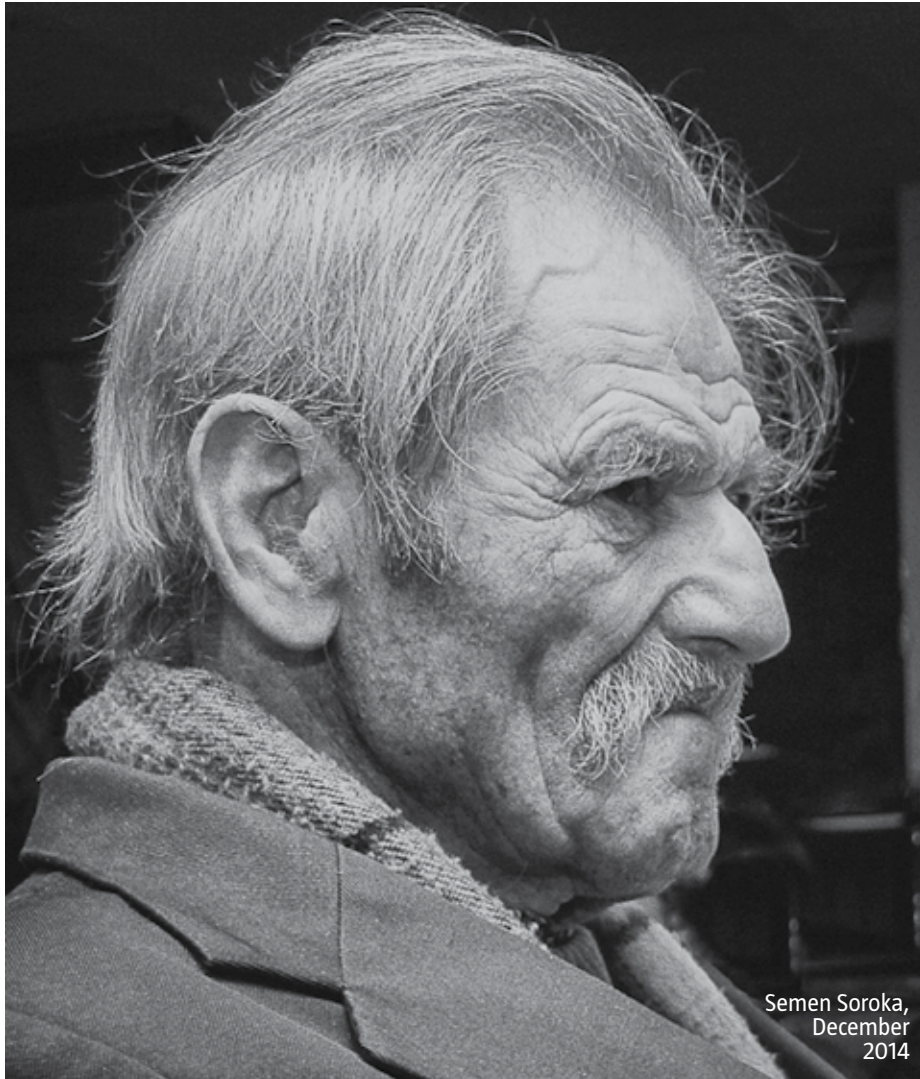
But the wider relevance of the document was widely noted – especially in relation to countries



CHARTER OF THE FOREST WAS THE DOCUMENT THAT DID INDEED PROMISE RIGHTS AND PROTECTION TO ORDINARY PEOPLE, AND CRUCIALLY ALLOWED THEM ACCESS TO THE FORESTS AND LANDS WHERE THEY LIVED

such as Russia where there is a growing fear that the government is failing in its provisions to uphold the rule of law and individual human rights. The Queen's daughter, Princess Anne, rededicated the US memorial, saying Magna Carta "provides us with one of our most basic doctrines – that no person is above the law. In recent history and even today we see in many parts of the world that power without the rule of law can lead to human suffering of terrible proportions. But it takes all of us to stand up for these principles." ■

The Man Who Never Laid Down Arms



Semen Soroka,
December
2014

Interviewed by
Volodymyr Panchenko

Semen Soroka, an 86-year-old Kirovohrad resident, is a man whose biography is a legend. Already at the age of 15, he was a courier for the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), with Yasen (Ash) as his nom-de-guerre. When he served a term in Stalin's GULAG, he had no name and no alias, with just a camp number instead: B9965.

I noticed him back in the late 1980s, when the first "smell" of democracy was felt in Kirovohrad, and the first anti-Soviet rallies began. Semen Soroka, a short elderly man in UPA military uniform, always rallied with a Ukrainian flag, which at that time was still "illegal."

For the KGB, which always kept a sharp eye on the former UPA fighter, Semen Soroka was someone who has never laid down arms. The one who never surrendered and never repented.

U.W.: A well-known Ukrainian dissident Yevhen Sverstyuk once said in an interview that his mindset was shaped by the Decalogue of a Ukrainian Nationalist. What about you?

My mindset was shaped by my family. My ancestors have Cossack roots going back to the 17th century. My grandma Olena proudly told me that one of her ancestors, Dmytro Hresko, served under Ivan Bohun. I often think of her. She was the one who taught me from early childhood that the most important things in life were God, Ukraine, and family. She was literate, and read many books from the Prosvita library in our village of Krychylsk in Rivne Oblast. That library had about 30,000 books! In 1952, the Soviets burned it down.

My father's life story is also amazing. In 1916, he was mobilized into the Tsarist army to fight

FROM SEMEN SOROKA'S MEMOIRS:

"In the morning of May 6, a reconnaissance detachment of NKVD troops counting 32 men came out of the wood near the village of Horodets and went along the edge of the meadow near the village of Svaryni in the direction of the villages of Borky and Rykhta near Krychylsk. When the enemy was level with Kucher's defense base, it suddenly came under machine-gun fire. Only the lucky few managed to escape from the embrace of eternal rest. [...] UPA fighters did not shoot at unarmed soldiers... In a while, planes started circling around in the air, dropping bombs on us. NKVD units that followed opened intense fire from guns and mortars. Losses on both sides were great. For a whole week, Red Army soldiers were carrying the dead and the wounded from Horodets wood to Antonivka station and then to the city of Sarny... After that, NKVD changed its tactics: units appeared dressed in insurgents' uniform. They totally annihilated the Ukrainian population. They raped, threw people in wells, burned them alive, or buried them alive in the woods... All Western Ukraine burned in fires and was turned into a battle front..."

PHOTO BY OLEKSANDR SHULESHKO

in the World War I. But already in March 1917 he returned home. He was a member of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine. In 1934, under Jozef Pilsudski's government, he was sent to a Polish prison camp Bereza Kartuska. When Hitler's troops came, they arrested him also. So, my father went to join insurgents in the woods.

U.W.: When did you start fighting?

In June 1943, when UPA announced a campaign to destroy railroads to get in the way of Germans taking the pillage and the youth out of Ukraine and to prevent SS and SD death squads from moving around. So my brother Panteleimon and I joined the UPA fighters, and I became Yasen the courier. In April 1944, NKVD special task units came to our land to root out the UPA underground in Rivne Oblast. One of the fights with the NKVD took place on May 6. I rarely took part in combat operations, but this one I remember very well.

U.W.: Did your parents know about your life in the woods? What did they say? In 1943 you were still a teenager...

There are things that parents should not know... When UPA's armed resistance was over, I found myself in the town of Dubno. I decided to study there. At the same time, I established a youth unit of OUN in the town. On February 22, 1952, I was arrested and taken to the internal prison of the Ministry of State Security Interior Troops of the Carpathian Military District in Rivne. I had to go through torture. I remember especially well the "bath" that the prisoners had to take. We were released from isolation wards and scalded with water that was at least 60°C hot. After that, they poured icy water on us. Interrogations would start at 6 p.m. and continue through the night, until 6 a.m. We had to "keep vigil," tied with chains to a metal stool, with handcuffs on our hands. I still remember the names of the investigators: Semykoz, Zabroda, and Ermakov.

On August 26, I was sentenced by the "troika" of the court martial under the Articles 54-1a, 54-11, and 20-54-8 for spreading nationalist literature, being a member of

FROM SEMEN SOROKA'S MEMOIRS:

"In the barrack No. 8, under my bunk were the bunks of Mykhaylo Polyansky, Volodymyr Slutsky and Viktor Soldatov. Polyansky was a former spy of the Soviet intelligence service (GRU). In 1948, he was withdrawn from Italy to Moscow and convicted by the "troika" of "high treason." He was sentenced to 25 years in prison. He perfectly knew everything about UPA and had a great respect for UPA fighters. He often said that UPA soldiers should be not in the Kremlin's concentration camps, but at large in Ukraine, fighting for the Freedom of their people."

UPA "bandit" organization and creating a youth OUN unit. I got 25 years in jail.

On October 24, 1952, we were taken to the North, to Inta station. There I ended up in the 6th camp servicing the construction of the 11th and 12th mines. I lived in barrack No. 8 on the upper bunk. Being physically exhausted after long interrogations, I was assigned to



IT TOOK SEVEN MONTHS TO DIG THE TUNNEL TO ESCAPE. IT TOOK FIVE AND A HALF MONTHS TO GET HOME

the Black Hundred charged with cleaning the mine's territory. Our "allowance" was simple: a plate of soup with rotten sprats, 200 grams of bread, black as soil, and a cup of boiled water without sugar.

U.W.: How did you learn about Stalin's death?

On the radio. There were people who cried, "What will become of us now?" I jumped on the table, shouting, "Thank God he croaked!"

U.W.: Tell us how you managed to escape.

It was thanks to Mykhaylo Polyansky. I have never met another man like Polyansky. He spoke English, French, and Italian fluently. And also Ukrainian. We became friends. He once said to me, "You are not afraid of anything." I told him, "What is there to be afraid of? All that matters to me is Ukraine." "To me too," Polyansky answered. He helped me get a job at the mine. This is where we began preparing our escape. There were six of us, a whole organization. Polyansky wanted to flee to the West, to Europe. But I was against it. I believed that I had to be at home and build Ukraine here, and not "over the hill." Finally, when it came to escaping, he didn't go with us, because I refused to go to the West.

U.W.: How did you flee from the mine? Was it through a tunnel?

Yes, we made a tunnel at the depth of 70 meters, 130 meters long.

U.W.: What did you do with the waste?

We threw it with the coal. It took us seven months to dig the tunnel. With coal picks. At first, all went well, but then the frozen clay

BIO

Semen Soroka was born on August 3, 1928 in the village of Krychylsk in Rivne Oblast to a family of farmers. From June 1943 to 1948, he took part in the national liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people against the Nazis and the Bolsheviks in the Northern Polissya. He served as a courier of a UPA detachment led by Kucher (Danylo Kulish) under the alias of Yasen. He took part in the battle with NKVD Interior Troops in Horodets woods in late May 1944 (Sarny County of Rivne Oblast). In 1948-1952, he studied at an agricultural college in Dubno. Arrested in 1952 by the Security Service of the USSR. Sentenced on August 26, 1952 by the court martial of the Carpathian Military District under Articles 54-1a, 54-8, 54-11 and 54-20 of the Criminal Code of the USSR to 25 years of correctional labor. In 1954, he managed to escape from the concentration camp and return to his home village. He visited Donbas, where former political prisoners worked. He later got a job in Kirovohrad, where on March 7, 1956 he was again arrested by the Soviet security service. He served his second sentence in Inta and Vorkuta. He was released in December 1958.

Since 1959, Semen Soroka has been living in Kirovohrad. He worked in construction and studied at the Kirovohrad Pedagogical Institute and at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv. Since 1988, member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Group. On April 30, 1990, headed the regional branch of the Ukrainian Republican Party. In 1992, along with other former political prisoners (Dmytro Ambrozyak, Ivan Zadorozhny, Anastasia Kytsko, and Fedir Ukhon), established a regional branch of the All-Ukrainian Fellowship of UPA Fighters named after General Roman Shukhevych (Taras Chuprynka), which is made up of two sections: combatants and fellows. The former includes immediate participants of the Resistance movement within the Ukrainian Insurgent Army that operated in 1941-1945 in the territory of the Kirovohrad Steppe region, while the latter consists of those who did not have a chance to fight for the independence of Ukraine with arms in hand. In 1997, Semen Soroka and repressed rebel fighters founded a society of political prisoners and repressed in Kirovohrad oblast. Semen Soroka is currently engaged in human rights activities



Semen Soroka (Yasen) is standing in the center. He is surrounded by fellow fighters, with the detachment commander Yavir standing to the left of him. Sarny County, Rivne Oblast, 1945

started. It was terrible. Nevertheless, we dug a hole with an exit to the tundra. We crawled into the tunnel. I was the third.

U.W.: What was the plan?

To get home and keep fighting. When we got out of the hole, each of us (and we were five) went in a different direction. Unfortunately, four got caught. When asked, "Where is Soroka?" they answered, "We ate him" (I was short and thin). Two were executed. When we were preparing for the flight, Polyansky gave me a green vest and a cap, so that I could pass for a military man. He also gave me a TT pistol, 20 cartridges and a knife. Where did he get all this?! Probably, being a former member of the Intelligence Service, he still had connections with local investigators.

U.W.: So, you broke free. Then what?

I went to the Inta train station and found some tea room. A field office of the KGB was just around

the corner! However, nobody noticed me in that tea room. A sat there for two days drinking beer, even though I hate it. No one paid attention to me. Probably, they took me for a member of the military. Then I walked home (I only traveled by train for about 20 kilometers, not more). I had a map that Polyansky gave me. It took me five and a half months to get home. I walked three thousand kilometers in total. All kinds of things happened on the way. At Kotlas station I noticed a "tail." But I escaped. I slept in all kinds of places. But I only managed to sleep indoors for two nights. This was at Mikun station (in Komi Republic). I went to a shop there and met a woman who was from Ternopil Oblast originally. She offered me a job there. But I went home. I came on April 17, 1955.

U.W.: How was the homecoming?

No one was waiting for me there. The district police officer would sometimes visit my parents

to encourage them, "Don't cry. If he were dead, the KGB would have informed me."

The first person I met in the village was Pavlo Bonatsky. He saw me and sat down. "Do you know how much your head costs?" he asked. "Twenty thousand. I read it in a newspaper. You're a dangerous criminal."

When it was still light, I went to the cemetery, where the bushes are. My grandmother is buried there. I lay on the ground next to my grandmother, Olena Hresko, and she protected me until the night. At about half past eight, I returned home. I entered the house. Mom and dad were having a dinner. They looked at me, and mom started crying, "Oh, I thought I would never see you again."

They hid me in the attic. The next day, my father made a hiding place for me between the house and the barn.

Several days passed. "Why am I lying here?" I thought. "I could

be lying in jail just as well." So I went to Lviv and Ternopil oblasts to find old connections. But I didn't find anyone. I returned home, stayed for another week and took off! I went to Lviv again.

On the train, I met captain Zabroda, who was an investigator in my case. I rushed to the door and managed to jump from the moving train. Zabroda did not pursue me, though. All of them, those KGB guys, are cowards.

After a while, I moved to Kirovohrad Oblast, which I was already familiar with. I went to the village of Petrivka, Khmelyove County. Some of our people could be there: I was sent there back in 1945.

I found a job, building silo pits. I managed to get a passport. In a few months, I moved to Kirovohrad. I started working at the Red Star factory as a carpenter. I lived in a dorm...

U.W.: So how did they "get your number"?

They found out that I came from Western Ukraine. They gave a shake-up to everyone. I went home, to Rivne Oblast, to visit my parents. And when I came back... I was walking along the Karl Marx street. And I saw six people standing there, waiting. They took me and clapped irons on me on the corner of Marx and Shevchenko streets. They took me to the KGB. There, in cell No. 3, I spent some time. On March 7, 1956, I was sent to Kyiv. I still remember some of the names of "my" KGBists. For example, Chernomoretz, whose real name was Hnyda. He was not such a bad person after all, and during the investigation, he even helped me a little bit... I also remember Lieutenant Huzeyev... Anyway, the result is well known: Vorkuta again, only this time not for long, because the "thaw" had already started, and GULAG was decreasing in size. So, in December 1959 I was already free.

U.W.: When were you scared?

I can't remember ever being scared. I remember in October 1954, when I was walking home after the flight, there were two wolverines following me. We went together as far as the Usa River. The river was shallow, but it was in flood. I walked across the river, and the wolverines stayed behind.

On another occasion, a wolf followed me all the way to Kotlas. For about 30 kilometers. There was already snow on the ground. You walk, and something is cracking behind you. You stop, and there's no sound. That wolf followed me at a distance of 10 meters. And so we came to the North Dvina. The river was about 80 meters wide. I made a raft and left. When I pulled out, the wolf started howling! I waved him goodbye, and my hair stood on end. God sent that wolf to protect me.

In general, I am not afraid of death. But I do not want to die.

U.W.: After getting out of jail for a second time, you finally acquired a higher education. How did it happen?

In 1962, I entered the Kirovohrad Pedagogical Institute to study Biology. In 1964, I transferred to the evening department of Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv. It had a department of Biochemistry, in which I was inter-

posed to be a scoundrel. Staff director of the Kirovohrad Oblast Board of Education sent me to Pavlysh to work for writer Vasyl Sukhomlynsky. He was already famous at that time. He received me very politely and kindly, and we started to talk. Sukhomlynsky said that we needed to develop villages, and that a good teacher was the one who prepared the youth for the village life. I believed, however, that students had to prepare for universities, to become first-class specialists. So, eventually I ended up in Ustynivka County in the south of Kirovohrad Oblast. There I worked as a teacher of chemistry, in the village of Sednivka.

U.W.: You mentioned your family...

I married a girl from my home village. She is a true friend to me. We share the same interests. She rescued me many times. The KGB never left me alone. Several times they came to our place looking for weapons. So my wife would tell them, "Don't come in, he (that is, me) is in such a state that he can do something to you..." She scared them away. Now she is ill, unfortunately. We have two children: son Hryhoriy (he worked at a chemical factory and now lives in Kyiv) and daughter Lyudmyla. She teaches at a college in Kirovohrad. My son was also under pressure, because of me.

U.W.: How many former UPA fighters still remain in the region?

There are only five combatants left: Volodymyr Karatash, Lyudmyla Hryhorashenko, Anastasia Drobot, Oleksandr Koval and I, Semen Soroka.

U.W.: All who know you agree that "Soroka is an incurable optimist." Is it so?

Certainly. I am sure that Ukraine will have a future.

P.S. Semen Soroka is a man of integrity. Should it happen (God forbid!) that, say, on the Kruty Heroes Memorial Day or on the Unity Day only one person shows up to the city square, this will definitely be him, Semen Soroka. And this short man, as always, will wear the Ukrainian Insurgent Army uniform and hold a Ukrainian flag in his hands. ■

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ested. I "served" for three years in the library, reading boring books. There, in a sometimes half-empty hall, I was noticed by professor Ferdman, the author of the textbooks that I was reading. We became friends. He even invited me to his home.

U.W.: Were you affected by the wave of the Ukrainian national revival in Kyiv in those days (1964-1967)?

No. I lived a lonely life. I studied at the evening department, lived in a dorm, and on weekends I went to Kirovohrad, where I already had a family. I studied, making up for the lost time. Later, I worked as a teacher. First, in the village of Dobre in Vilshany County. I did not stay there for long, though, because I could not stand the headmaster, who hap-

Starting July 9**The Philosophy of Migration**
Museum of Cultural Heritage
(40b, vul. Moskovska, Kyiv)

This exhibition project is a collaboration among several arts organizations and young Ukrainian artists intended to look at the phenomenon of migration from the point of view of an individual in the 21st century. Through dialog among the personages and exhibits in the museum, the artists talk about the changes that migration brings to a person and the possible dangerous consequences of this process on the individual. Events in Ukraine today reflect the themes raised by these artists. Project participants include Myroslav Vaida, Maria Kulikovska, Anna Naduda, Roman Mykhailov, Ruslan Tremba, and Serhiy Petliuk.

**July 10-11, 24-25, 31 7 p.m.****Mystery Play**
Nyvky Park
(Kyiv, Shevchenkovsky District)

Ukraine's capital is about to see, for the first time, an event that has become extremely popular in Great Britain. Like a game that immerses viewers in the theatrical performance, the audience can move freely on the stage or during the film screening that is preceded by a certain performance. While playing their roles, the actors from time to time disguise themselves as members of the audience and engage real theatergoers in the process. The performance in Kyiv will include the film *The Shawshank Redemption*, so that the "locale" for the play will be a stylized version of the Shawshank prison.

**July 10-18****Odesa International Film Festival**
Odesa

Film fans have been waiting impatiently for this Odesa event. It starts with a bang this year, screening Orson Welles's great film classic, *Citizen Kane*. This is the story of a media magnate who starts out as a 'public servant of the community' but gradually turns into a power-hungry maniac. In addition to the opening film, this year's program includes movies from around the world, most of them premiers. The program focuses on high-quality art films that are accessible to ordinary viewers, what is now called "art streams."

**July 18-19****Street Food Fest**
Platforma Art Factory
(1, vul. Bilomorska, Kyiv)

"Active recreation and healthy eating" is the slogan for the 12th Street Food Fest. This year's festival is intended to popularize healthy lifestyles in every aspect, including through food. "We are trying to raise this festival to European levels, so we are following European trends," say the festival's organizers. "Active recreation and healthy eating are the main trend today," so the menus of participants will predominantly focus on salads, light snacks and cold beverages.

**July 22, 7 p.m.****Rock Symphony**
Palats Ukraina concert hall
(103, vul. Velyka Vasylkivska, Kyiv)

This unusually formatted concert brings together some of the most famous hits of legendary rock musicians. The choir and orchestra will perform songs by Aerosmith, the Beatles, Bon Jovi, Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, Muse, Nirvana, Queen, the Rolling Stones, the Scorpions, and other rock greats. Virtuoso performance combines with high-drive sound to create unforgettable impressions and emotions. This is a joint production between Notre Dame de Paris le Concert and Mozart l'opera Rock le Concert.

**July 30, 8 p.m.****Days of Inspired Film: Sports**
Kinopanorama Movie House
(19, vul. Shota Rustaveli, Kyiv)

This film festival will include the presentation of 10 of the best short motivational films, drawing on such human qualities as strength of character, goal-orientation, achievement, and the limits of human capabilities. This year's program includes the films *Burning Dream*, *Heat*, *Do What You Want*, and more. Most of these clips are based on real events. Through sports, individuals have an opportunity not only to discover their own potential, but to also reinforce strength of spirit. The inspirational atmosphere of this event will be filled with music, stimulating conversations and gift drawings.



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